

Tracing the Telephone in  
Western Massachusetts

1877-1930



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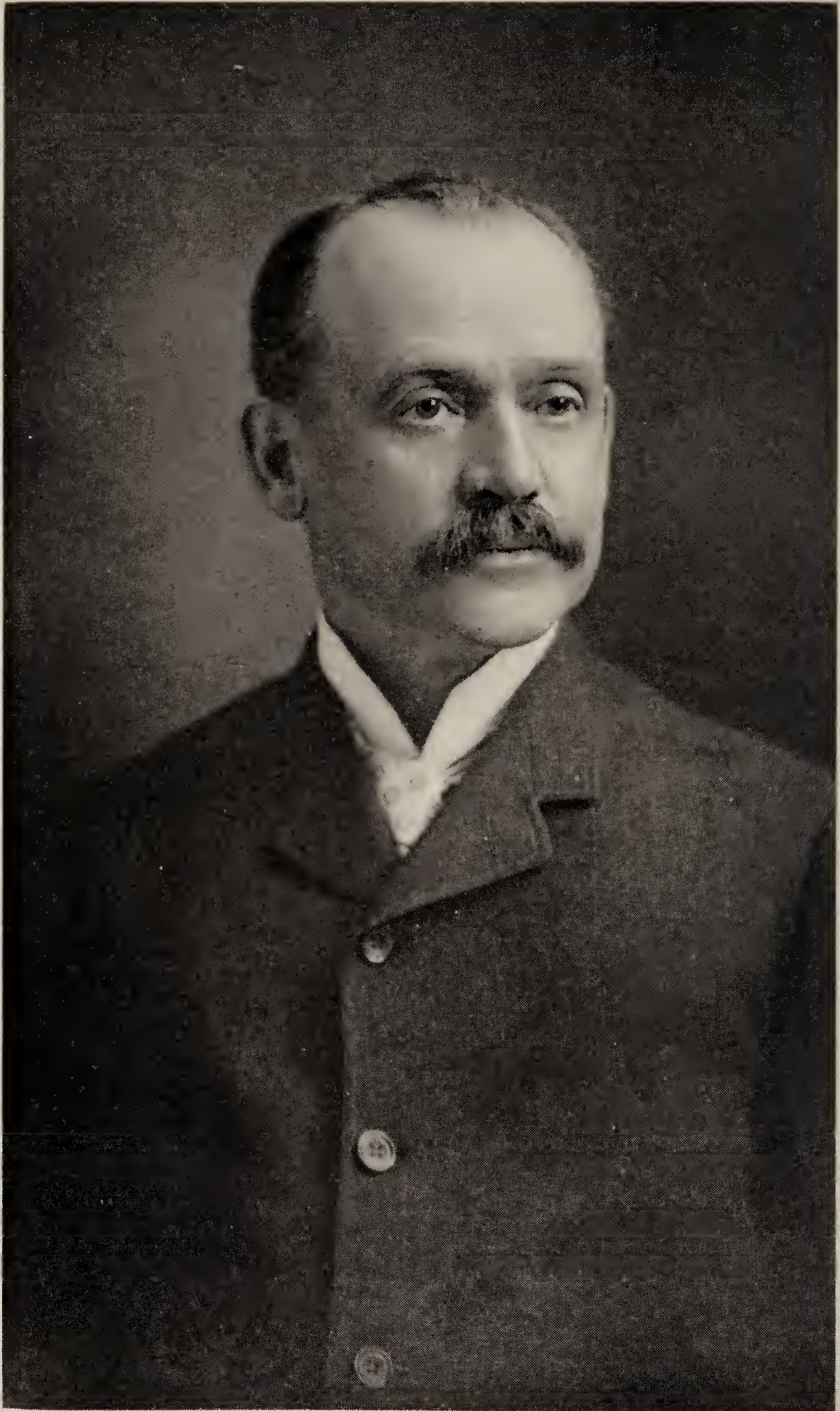
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WILLIAM J. DENVER



Tracing the Telephone in  
Western Massachusetts  
1877-1930

*Compiled and Edited by*  
CLARK M. WILSON

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.  
1958

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BY GEORGE MCKIBBIN & SON, BRATTLEBORO, VT.

## *Acknowledgments*

The information regarding the early telephone business in Western Massachusetts was obtained principally from contemporary newspapers. Fortunately, the libraries in the larger communities have maintained volumes of newspapers dating back to long before the birth of the telephone,—June 2, 1875.

The library people were found to be very obliging and helpful, and the many visits, especially to the Springfield and Northampton libraries, did not seem to wear out their patience.

Miss Alice Moore, of the Connecticut Valley Historical Library, Springfield, provided interesting material concerning the early Springfield telephone history.

The libraries which were visited in quest of early telephone history were as follows:

Connecticut Valley Historical Library, Springfield

Springfield City Library

Forbes Library, Northampton

Holyoke City Library

Westfield Athenaeum

Young Men's Library Association, Palmer

Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield

North Adams Public Library

Mason Library, Great Barrington

Greenfield Public Library

The Springfield *Daily Republican* was the chief disseminator of news events occurring throughout Western and Central Massachusetts and Vermont, and even carried a column headed "Eastern Massachusetts."

Other city newspapers contributed valuable local and sub-

urban news regarding the early telephone business in their areas, and provided other interesting information.

The newspapers which were chiefly consulted were:

*Springfield Daily Republican*

*Holyoke Transcript*

*Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Courier*

*Western Hampden Times and Westfield News-Letter*

*Palmer Journal*

*Berkshire County Eagle*, Pittsfield

*The Sun*, Pittsfield

*Adams Transcript*, North Adams

*Berkshire Courier*, Great Barrington

*Greenfield Gazette and Courier*

After the organization of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company, October 19, 1883, the telephone became accepted as a permanent affair and news items regarding it became increasingly scant.

Fortunately, *Telephone Topics* was started in May, 1907, and a reliable record of the telephone's progress has been recorded.

As far as is known, there is only one complete set of *Telephone Topics* in Western Massachusetts. John H. Armstrong, who joined the New England Telephone Co.'s Plant Department in 1903, maintained a file of *Telephone Topics* and also kept extra copies. In 1924, recognizing the methodical nature of William R. Parkinson, who had joined the Springfield Plant Department in July, 1922, John supplied him with the copies he didn't have, and "Bill" has carefully filed each number since then. The privilege of using this complete set of *Topics* has been of inestimable value.

Thomas A. Watson's autobiography, *Exploring Life*, published by D. Appleton and Company, and *Beginnings of Telephony* by Frederick Leland Rhodes, published by Harper & Brothers, have supplied timely information.

Thanks are extended to the many telephone men and women for their kindness in providing interesting information of the bygone days and also choice pictures.

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TRACING THE TELEPHONE IN  
WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

1877 - 1930





## CHAPTER 1

### *Introduction of the Electric Speaking Telephone and Private Lines*

AFTER the issue of Alexander Graham Bell's fundamental patent U.S. No. 174,465, March 7, 1876, a little over a year elapsed before the telephone was introduced to Western Massachusetts. Of course it had been improved somewhat during this time; and, evidently, there was still considerable room for improvement.

The excitement caused by the announcement in the papers that Professor Bell was to visit Springfield with his telephone May 12, 1877, can best be gleaned from a perusal of the following items appearing in the *Springfield Daily Republican* from May 8 to 12:

“We are to have Professor Bell and his telephone Saturday evening and the details of the telephonic exhibition have been arranged. Professor Bell is to be stationed in the Springfield City Hall, which is to be connected with the Pittsfield Academy of Music, with Westfield as the way station.

“There will be a brief explanatory lecture by Professor Bell and then for an hour a concert of vocal solos and duets, cornet solos, and organ playing to be sent through the telephone from Westfield.

“Afterward some of our prominent citizens are to talk with Judge Colt and others at Pittsfield over fifty miles of wire. Wires will be stretched from the City Hall to the Western Union office, by courtesy of William J. Denver, Manager.

There are to be four telephones at the City Hall so that the concert at Westfield may be heard to the best advantage. Tickets go on sale at Gorham and Wood's Friday, 25 cents, 35 cents for reserved seats.

"A considerable Northampton party is coming down to the novel performance and a train will be run after the concert from this city to Easthampton and Northampton and a delegation from Williston Seminary will thus be able to attend the concert."

The above news items, supplemented by a small advertisement, afforded the concert plenty of publicity. Professor Bell, whose chief means of livelihood, at that time, was teaching his father's system of "Visible Speech" at Boston University, arrived in Springfield safe and sound. Fred Gower, a young newspaper man of Providence, who was business manager of Bell's lectures, went on to Pittsfield. Professor Bell, no doubt, was conveyed to the City Hall in a little wooden horse car, and settled back to inspect the sights of Main St., as the horses jogged along. Springfield was then a city of about 33,000.

The outcome of this exciting demonstration can be best learned from parts of an editorial and a news article appearing next day in the same paper:

"The telephone concert was entirely a success in showing the nature and workings of the invention, although the instrument is not yet advanced enough to transmit speech or music for any public purpose. There was one telephone on the platform and two others at other points of the City Hall, where an exceptionally fine audience was gathered. Professor A. Graham Bell, the inventor, made a brief address and his assistant, Mr. Gower, a similar one at Pittsfield, explaining the nature of the instrument, which is a wooden box, somewhat smaller than an ordinary photographer's camera. The playing of the cabinet organ at Westfield resulted in the reproduction of the tunes at Springfield and Pittsfield, rather more faintly than the original but still clearly distinguishable except when the inevitable late-comers disturbed the audience. The reproductions were rather more audible in Springfield than at Pittsfield, the tele-

graph line at this end being made with soldered joints, but with merely twisted joints from Westfield to Pittsfield. Professor Bell carried on conversation with the operator at Westfield and with Mr. Gower at Pittsfield, their words being audible but indistinguishable to the audience. Bell remarked that the possibilities of the telephone were only partly known, but Saturday night's experiments gave a satisfactory idea of what it is hoped to accomplish by it.

“That the conversational capacities of the telephone are, even in its present imperfect condition, equal to genuine usefulness seems obvious. Among the purposes to which it will be applied first are for conveying intelligence in mines, which is already under consideration, and for communicating from one office with a large number of factories for which a prominent New England manufacturer intends to utilize it, and for the benefit of divers beneath the ocean.

“The public is indebted to Mr. George H. Cary of the First Pittsfield Grammar School for its evening with the telephone, and we regret to learn that he is likely to lose money by his venture. The audience at the Pittsfield end was a losing one, and our big hall full did not make its expected returns.”

Eleven days after this demonstration, Mr. Gower was back in Springfield, stopping at the Haynes House, where he was ready to consult with parties wishing to introduce telephones for purposes of business or experiment. Several proprietors of large business concerns and manufactories in Springfield and Holyoke were interested.

The Holyoke *Transcript* of June 2, 1877, had this article: “Two of Professor Bell's agents were in Holyoke Thursday adjusting telephonic boxes to the telegraph wire connecting the two mills of the Whiting Paper Co. The distance between the mills is about one-fourth of a mile. The employees whose business it is to send communication are quickly learning to use it. The box is about a foot long and about six inches square. Inside is a horse-shoe magnet and the iron membrane. The telephone company rent two boxes to business concerns for forty dollars per year, and ten dollars per box for each additional box. The rate between an office and a dwelling house or be-

tween two dwelling houses is twenty dollars. Experiments are constantly being made and any new discoveries will be added to the leased boxes.”

On July 19, 1877, the *Republican* described an improved telephone as follows: “The telephone is now made in a smaller and more convenient form, consisting now of a circular mouth-piece about two inches across with a handle some three inches long, at the other end of which the wires are attached. The bar magnet is contained in the handle and the small, vibrating disk is within the mouth-piece. Two of these are generally placed at each end of a route that a person may hear more plainly by holding them to both ears. An arrangement has been made for an electro-magnet call bell, to be used when one wishes to begin conversation, which costs \$15 additional. The Whiting Mills of Holyoke are now supplied with the new style of double-barreled telephones.”

August 20, 1877, the *Republican* announced that “Manager Denver of the Western Union Telegraph Co. has the agency for the introduction of the telephone with Professor Bell’s latest improvements. The Gas Company have a line in working order from their office in the old Savings bank building to the Gas works.”

Giles Blague, historian of Springfield’s 100th anniversary of city government, relates that in 1877 four neighbors and friends decided to have a four party private line for social and business purposes. They were Lewis J. Powers, Charles A. Nichols, Henry S. Hyde, and Elisha Morgan.

Competition for the attention of the public, however, was heightened by the introduction of Edison’s phonograph. It was placed on exhibition in Springfield in May of 1878; and visited other communities, talking, singing, and laughing for the entertainment of the people.

An interesting story concerning this new form of entertainment appeared in the *Republican*, June 7: “While the Hampden hall phonograph was reproducing the words of Professor Pike, an elderly lady, who sat patiently on one of the front benches, suddenly exclaimed, ‘Now Mr. Phonograph man, you can’t fool me any longer if you can the rest of the people. I’m going to look inside of them doors,’ referring to doors in

the counter on which the phonograph rested, 'an I'll bet I can find a man or boy helpin' you fool this crowd.' The professor stood aside and the old lady looked and found no one, upon which she said, 'Well, you beat the circus. You are the best ventriloquist I ever heard. But don't you think you can make me believe that thing can talk.' "

As the length of communication was increased, it occurred to several progressive business men, who had enterprises both in Springfield and Holyoke, to have them connected by telephone. On Oct. 9, 1878, the *Holyoke Transcript* mentioned that Metcalf and Luther and E. S. Fay were making efforts to organize a stock company to establish a telephonic line between Springfield and Holyoke. December 23rd, this *Transcript* news item appeared:

"The new private concern, in which W. H. Wilkinson is a leading spirit, had a force of 15 men at work last week setting the poles. They had got beyond Chicopee Saturday night. This side of Brightwood, the wire will be strung for the present, at least, on the fire alarm telegraph poles, and south of Franklin Street, on the houses. No great objection is made by anybody to the new poles, though once in a while a man would like to have them run through the back lots. The city engineer is to see that the poles are put where they ought to go."

Three days later another item disclosed that in order to make their poles in Chicopee and elsewhere as free as possible from objection, the owners intend painting their poles in villages. Not content with that, Mr. Reynolds, who was building the line, explained that due to the approaching cold weather the work was done rapidly, and there was but little time to get expressions from property-holders, but he would be glad to meet interested parties with a view to learning their wishes for any changes.

About three weeks later, when the line was nearly completed, the stockholders were much perturbed by a hitch in the undertaking, which is best explained by the *Republican's* reporter: "It seems that the selectmen of the town of Chicopee at first told the company that they could run the line through

the place for \$25 or \$50, and the work was pushed through with that understanding. But the alleged defacement of the streets raised such a howl of indignation that the selectmen backed down, and now say that \$300 is the least possible sum that will soothe the wounded feelings of Chicopee. The company have had full permission to set their poles in the limits of Springfield, running part of the way on the fire-alarm telegraph poles, and there is no incumbrance in Holyoke, as they run along the banks of the canal.”

It is consoling to read that a citizen of Chicopee took a different view and expressed it in these imposing words: “Since the telephone is but one of the treasures, by the aid of science, born of nature, to stifle the breath of these new comers is simply an expression of barbarism that we are not prepared to believe still lurks in the nature of the people in this vicinity.”

It is not known whether it was this touching sentiment or the Company’s willingness to make good any damage done—with an implied threat to move their poles to the other side of the Connecticut River, thus depriving the town of future benefits—but, anyway, after a short “cooling off” period, the *Republican* announced that the selectmen have come down from \$300 to \$50 in their demand on the telephone company.

Evidently, this concession was acceptable to the irate stockholders, for no further mention of this financial transaction is recorded. Telephonic connections were finished in Holyoke Jan. 18, 1879. The stock owners applied for incorporation under the name of the Springfield Holyoke Telephone Co. Its importance to the progress of the telephone business is shown by this *Republican* article:

“The telephone line which J. F. Reynolds, representing the New England Telephone Co., (not the present New England Telephone & Telegraph Co.) has put up between this city and Holyoke is the first private line between two towns, so far as known, and is the longest private line in New England and probably in the United States. Including the connections, it has taken twelve miles of wire and has nine or more stations. The voices of different individuals can be distinguished, and conversation carried on as easily as through a line of 100 feet.

Mr. Reynolds, W. H. Wilkinson, E. D. Metcalf and E. S. Bradford own equal shares of the line. The telephones themselves, with the call-bell attachments, are rented of the Bell Telephone Co., who never sell the instruments. Mr. Reynolds has also put up private lines in Springfield for A. L. Moffit, J. M. Cowan, W. O. Collins, John Bangs, George Fisk, and the Armory, some ten miles of wire in all. There are seven stations at the Armory, one of them being at the Water-Shops. Besides these, he has put up about 55 miles in the surrounding towns."

On Feb. 26, 1879, there appeared the first newspaper mention of establishing a telephone exchange in Springfield like one in New Haven. Quoting the *Republican*:

"A circuit line for the city is talked of, connecting merchants with their customers, etc. There is said to be such a line (system) in New Haven, Conn. which has some 300 stations. There is a central switching station, where the connections are made, and when a woman, for instance, wants to order her dinner she speaks to the switching station, and asks to be put in communication with her butcher or grocer, and it is all done in a moment. But one person can use the line at a time."

A Springfield item first mentions Frank Daboll:

"F. G. Daboll, the agent, put in a Draper's acoustics speaking telephone yesterday for Dr. William G. Breck, connecting his house on Round Hill with his barn a distance of about a 1000 feet. Wilson Eddy has also had one strung between his house on Cyprus Street and the Boston and Albany shops."

Before embarking on the next phase of the telephone business, it might be well to scan the following items from the *Republican* and *Holyoke Transcript* to see how our forbears disported themselves in those elysian days:

All the high school boys are writing to President Hayes, and quite a number were made happy in receiving a card bearing his name—written in a bold strong hand. (The girls, as of today, were too modest.)

A 200 pound sturgeon was caught near Willimansett. Pickerel fishing is now the chief sport, and frequent parties are made up for Hampton and Southwick ponds, while occasionally some specially enthusiastic fishermen go to far-away Otis, and pretend to like the trip into the polar regions. The river is full of good sized black bass. About 10,000 young salmon have been placed in Ashley Pond. Measures have been taken in Connecticut to let Salmon run up to and over the Holyoke dam.

The bicycle rink was opened in Sovereign's Hall on Bridge Street last evening with a lively patronage. The bicycle is a ticklish affair to manage at the outset but is soon controlled; and those, who have had velocipede experience, have little trouble with it.

Joseph Pepin, Holyoke, has built a pair of stairs from his skating rink house to the ice edge of the upper canal, where he has his amusement field fenced in. He has had his rink planed down and polished off.

The walking mania has again struck Holyoke. The Benson-Gardner walk at Parsons Hall started yesterday at 11 A.M., and at 8 P.M. Benson had walked 38 miles and Gardner 40. Benson's last mile was the quickest, in 10 minutes and 24 seconds.

A party of sixteen of the first business men of Springfield and their wives visited the Holyoke House on a sleigh ride last evening and had a private supper. The party was chaperoned by N. A. Winans.

The steamer Dexter will take parties from Holyoke, who wish to go to the ball game in Springfield on next Saturday, between the Holyokes and Springfields, for 50 cents including admission to the park and return.

The Binghamton *Republican* tells of a lady who can't see why baseball players change pitchers so often. She thinks they ought to get one that would hold enough in the first place.



## CHAPTER 2

### *The Springfield Telephone Company and the District Telephone and Automatic Signal Company*

NEW HAVEN, Conn., was the first city to have a commercial telephone central office. A crude switchboard, with 21 stations, was set up by George W. Coy Jan. 28, 1878. Lowell's telephone exchange took the honors in Mass.—April 19, 1878.

Springfield had progressed in the telephone art to a point, where it too, was a likely prospect for such an enterprise. It is no wonder then that there appeared in the *Springfield Daily Republican* Feb. 28, 1879, the following momentous news:

“The admirable system of local telephone communication is to be introduced in Springfield by the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. of New Haven. This is a company incorporated under the laws of Conn. for the purpose of owning and operating the district telephone in six cities: New Haven, Hartford, Springfield, Meriden, Middletown and New Britain. In three of these places the system is in successful working order, New Haven furnishing 550 stations, Hartford, where the company began business only six weeks ago, 250 and Meriden 75. Its capital stock when fully organized will be \$40,000 which is being rapidly taken up in the cities named. In other cities the existing private lines have mostly been consolidated with this general service, and such will, no doubt, be the case here, even the Holyoke line being perhaps merged into the

new company. The convenience of this plan of quick local communication can hardly be overestimated. It answers all the purposes of the district telegraph, and does a great deal more, connecting business men with their homes, merchants with their customers and lessening the friction of domestic life. The Bell telephone is the one used by this company."

H. P. Frost, President and Treasurer, and G. W. Coy, Secretary and Supt., of the "Nutmeg" Company, must have been somewhat taken back, when they became acquainted with the ominous news published in the same paper about a week later:

"Springfield promises to be uncommonly well provided with telephone communication. Local Telegraph Manager William J. Denver evidently does not mean to have his lately established messenger system superseded by an outside concern. He has accordingly secured the approval and cooperation of the Western Union management, and has already issued circulars soliciting subscribers for telephones. The charge for the ordinary service on a circuit wire will be \$22 a year, the same rate established by the New Haven Co. For separate wires, which remove the annoyance of any but the individual signal, a higher but still very reasonable price will be asked. Mr. Denver is well equipped by his experience and position, as well as by his local acquaintance and reputation, for the successful management of this enterprise, and is likely to give the New Haven company a pretty hard push for the field. The territory covered will be from Brightwood to Mill river and from Lake Como to the Conn. river." Lake Como, alias Goose Pond, lay close to State Street between what is now Catherine and Andrew Streets.

The rival companies lost no time in securing sites for their offices. The District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co., also referred to in the papers as the New Haven Co., the Bell Co., and the District Telephone Co., was the first to announce that it had taken a five years' lease of rooms on the second floor of the Second National Bank block, 407 Main Street. This was where the Valley Bank & Trust Co. is located.

On March 19th, 1879, the paper proffered this information:

“W. J. Denver has taken a back store in the Music Hall block with the entrance on Pynchon Street, opposite the entrance to the Post Office, as the headquarters of the Springfield Telephone Co., and will begin stringing the necessary wires in all directions today.”

The Music Hall block, or Haynes Opera House, was situated on the southwest corner of Main and Pynchon Streets, where the Capitol Theatre is now located. The store taken by the Springfield Telephone Co., sometimes called the Western Union Co., or Denver's Co., was evidently at the end of the building on Pynchon Street, for later, mention is made of cutting a hole through the west wall of the office for a window. The Western Union Co.'s office was in the Haynes Hotel block, which was on the north side of Pynchon Street, corner of Main.

The Western Union Telegraph Co. had authorized Mr. Denver to build and operate a telephone exchange. Such a venture required both financial and legal assistance. It is obvious that he consulted his banker, Henry S. Hyde, President of the Agawam National Bank of Springfield. Mr. Hyde had great faith in the telephone and together they secured several prominent business men to become officials and probably stockholders of the new company. It was reported that the Western Union Co. took \$3,000 of the capital stock and ten local men put in \$300 each.

The organization of this Springfield Telephone Co. took place March 29, 1879, with C. A. Nichols President, H. S. Hyde Treasurer, W. J. Denver Manager, T. M. Brown Clerk, and as Directors, C. A. Nichols, W. J. Denver, E. Morgan, L. J. Powers, and H. M. Phillips.

Henry S. Hyde, in addition to his bank position, was Treasurer of the Wason Mfg. Co., railway car builders, and Vice President of the Hampden Savings Bank. Later he served for many years as Vice President of the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co., which position he resigned in 1914, but continued as a director until his death in 1917.

Charles A. Nichols had established a book publishing company and was Vice-President of the 5 Cents Savings Bank and became first President of United Electric Light Co.

Timothy M. Brown was one of the leading lawyers of the

city. He served as City Attorney for five years, when Hon. L. J. Powers and the Hon. H. M. Phillips were mayors.

Elisha Morgan, a descendent of Miles Morgan, one of the pioneers of Springfield, became General Ticket Agent of the Conn. River Railroad Co., then entered the envelope business, and with Chester W. Chapin, President of the Boston & Albany Railroad, formed the Morgan Envelope Co., later acquired by the U. S. Envelope Co.

Lewis J. Powers organized the Powers Paper Co. in 1866, of which he was President and Treasurer, and was elected Mayor of Springfield in 1878 and 1879.

Henry M. Phillips formed the Phillips Mfg. Co., steam heating apparatus, was elected State Representative and Senator and Mayor of Springfield in 1883, 1884 and 1885. In 1914 he was elected Vice President of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.

William J. Denver's wide acquaintance with the local public gained him special advantages in furthering his objective. Mr. Denver was born in Springfield Aug. 18, 1841. He was educated in the public schools and at the age of 15 took up telegraphy, becoming Manager of the Western Union Telegraph Co. in 1864.

The District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co., already organized in Conn., having received authority from the city council to conduct business here, appointed H. P. Frost, President, and George W. Coy, as Electrician and Supt. Mr. Herick P. Frost possessed unusual business ability. He obtained the right from the New England Telephone Co. (not the present one) to lease Bell instruments for use in the New Haven and Springfield districts at an annual rental of five dollars.

Mr. Coy was the man who built the switchboard for the first commercial exchange in New Haven. He was a Civil War veteran, a natural mechanic, and inventor. He secured the agency for the Bell Telephone Co. in New Haven and conceived the idea of establishing a telephone exchange.

The pride of having two telephone companies vying for their patronage was dampened somewhat by the thought of paying two telephone bills instead of one, and it was freely predicted that one company or the other would sell out before

actual operations were begun. The tenacity of these rivals wasn't reckoned with, however, for the enlivening competition continued longer than expected. The newspapers, at least, profited by the lengthy advertisements, which frequently adorned their columns.

Two of these advertisements are quoted now, as they present a prospectus of their peculiar qualifications to serve the public:

“The Springfield Telephone Co. desire to assure their patrons and friends that they already have contracts with over one hundred of the principal business and professional men in this city for the use of their telephones, and that within a very few days they shall commence to set up their instruments and connect them with the main office. The public is cautioned against placing any confidence in the misrepresentations attempted to be made by other parties as to alleged exclusive control of patents and also is reminded that an important advantage is gained by being connected with the company having the largest number of patrons and an exclusively local management.

“The Gold and Stock Telegraph Co., who make the phones operated by this Company, announce that in case any action for infringement of patents are begun against anybody using their instruments, they will, on notice and request, assume the defense. This is in view of their claim to own or control the fundamental inventions of every speaking telephone hitherto invented, constructed or patented.” W. J. Denver, Manager, C. A. Nichols, President.

The second advertisement read as follows:

“The District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. have now in use more than nine hundred telephones in Hartford and New Haven. To Springfield we are now giving the result of all improvements, making the most perfect system possible. The Western Union Co. have no right to use the Telephone and any person to whom they attempt to confer such pretended right will be an infringer. Mr. Elisha Gray, under whom the Western Union claim to be licensed, has admitted Professor Bell's rights.”

By H. P. Frost, President.

A *Republican* item of April 12, 1879, shows that the Springfield Telephone Co. was pretty near the point of getting their switchboard into operation:

“The Springfield Telephone Co. got a temporary switchboard lent them by the Meriden Company into operation yesterday, and are ready for business with and between the dozen private boxes already put in. Boxes for the other applicants, who number some 200, will be put in as speedily as possible.”

On April 18th it was reported that this company had decided to give their patrons both the Edison transmitter and receiving telephone, and that there were then 40 boxes in operation.

April 16, 1879, is the date commonly accepted as the opening of the first telephone exchange by the Springfield Telephone Co.

The Springfield Club, at the corner of Worthington and Chestnut Streets, is reputed to be the customer to receive the first message. This, no doubt, was because the officials of the company belonged to that distinguished club and were nervously waiting to see if the new contraption would work.

The District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. did not get their exchange into operation until a little later, according to an address given by Maurice S. Sherman, Editor of the *Springfield Union*.

On April 25, 1879, an advertisement appeared, which gave the names of eighteen doctors and druggists connected to the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co.'s Central Office. This is the only record published in the papers listing some of the first Springfield subscribers.

### Telephones, Doctors, and Druggists

The following Doctors and Druggists are now connected with the District Telephone Co.'s central office, number 407 Main Street. The public is invited to use the telephones of this company at all times without charge.

Doctors

Bowles, S. W.	Corner Main and State
Brooks, S. D.	41 Vernon
Brooks, L. S.	41 Vernon
Brown, J. R.	Patton's Block
Clark, David	32 Maple
Gardiner, W. H.	155 State
Hamilton, T. E.	84 Greenwood
Hamilton, T. E.	274 Main
Hooks, John	183 State
McFarland, L.	273 State
Pomeroy, S. F.	201 State
Rice, A. R.	45 Pynchon

Druggists

Brewer, H. & J.	463 Main
Gates, E. N.	53 Main
Gates, E. O. & Co.	232 Main
Hill, G. A.	326 Main
St. John, S. Z.	Corner Main & Union
Webber & Co.	111 State

Five days later, the District Telephone Co. distributed its first list of subscribers, numbering 79. A feature of this Company's service was advertised as follows: "Our system is the only one in Springfield where all conversations are strictly private. Our bells are so constructed that eavesdropping is impossible." This feature was effected by a selective signalling device which permitted the operator to ring a party without the other bells on the line being sounded—"Automatic Signal Co." being thus derived.

The Springfield Telephone Co., which was the larger of the two, contributed to the *Republican's* coffers with a long ad on May 8, 1879. The company was proud to state that it had 300 customers (including held orders) and "was giving them the Edison transmitter with an additional telephone without cost, thus enabling them to hear without constantly changing

the position of the instrument, which advantage will be greatly appreciated." Thirty-two circuits were strung throughout the city for the 125 instruments actually in use. The early telephones consisted of single-unit instruments used both for talking and listening, which necessitated transferring it quickly from mouth to ear—back and forth. Signs were posted, "Don't talk with your ear or listen with your mouth."

A quick look at the economic situation in 'ye olden days' follows. Springfield's population in 1880 was 33,340, with a high school attendance of 381 in 1877. Holyoke, with a census of 21,915 in 1880, had 110 enjoying higher education in 1878.

Local transportation in Springfield was provided by hacks and horse cars. The route of these small wooden cars was from Brightwood through North Main and Main to State Street and up State Street to Winchester Park. Also from State Street through Main and Locust to Mill Street. The suburbs were reached by train, stagecoaches, and omnibus lines.

The steamers Dexter, River Belle, and Calla made excursions to Gallups Grove, to Holyoke, and other places; and tugs hauled barges up the river as far as Holyoke.

Gas was the principal means of illumination, and hotels had signs in rooms for the protection of those more used to kerosene lamps—"Don't blow out the gas." The Springfield Gas Light Co. had 2100 consumers of gas and 500 public lamps. The lamp lighters plodded the streets, except on nights when the moon cast an illuminating ray. Thomas Edison had just patented an electric lamp; and on March 29, 1880, four Fuller Electric lights were tried out in Alderman Skinner's Silk Mill in Holyoke.

J. C. Parsons organized the Parsons Paper Co. in 1853, the first paper mill in Holyoke; and, when the telephone was introduced, there were 21 paper mills employing 2500.

After getting their exchanges in Springfield pretty well organized, the rival companies turned their attention to Holyoke—known throughout the world as "the Paper City." The *Republican* announced April 2, 1879, that the Automatic Company had bought the private line to Holyoke. Mr. Denver's Company had obtained control of three wires to Holyoke, which belonged to the Atlantic & Pacific



Telegraph Co. Half of the poles had to be replaced and new wires strung.

On April 5, 1879, the first assurance of a "circuit" appeared in the *Holyoke Transcript*: "W. J. Denver, manager of the Springfield Telephone Co., has obtained 25 subscribers (applicants) and will soon organize a telephone district; and the establishment of 'a circuit' in Holyoke is assured."

There soon followed an advertisement in the *Transcript* announcing that the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. are now giving the result of all improvements to the city of Holyoke, and any person using Western Union telephones will be an infringer.

On May 3, the Springfield Telephone Co. presented the following ad: "Several subscribers have special wires, which no one uses but they, as, for instance, the Springfield Club and the Institution for Savings. These can be put in anywhere for \$48 per year, while a station on the ordinary circuit costs \$22. The Edison transmitter is used, giving a clearness to the message which no other system furnishes. A small battery jar is put into each house where the transmitter is used. The company opens an office in Chase's Drug Store in Holyoke today. At the rate the wires are going up over the city, Manager Denver thinks the people will be able to dispense with mosquito nets this summer."

Chase's Drug Store was located in the Holyoke House block at the corner of Dwight and Race Streets where J. Russell and Co. were and still are doing business.

On May 7th, the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. announced it would have its Holyoke office in the Perkins' block in running order in a few days and that the men were busily employed stringing the wires.

The Perkins' block was located at 40 High Street, northeast corner of Fountain Street. Benjamin F. Perkins was well acquainted with Messrs. Frost and Coy. He was of an inventive turn of mind and had supplied them with telephones and switchboards with new features, which were made at his machine shop on Front Street.

A few days later appeared this *Transcript* item: "The telephone wirepullers are playing at "Cats-cradle" across the

streets. Three wires are attached to the Second Congregational Church, and one wise man has prophesied its destruction in consequence."

On May 17, 1879, an article appeared which read "the telephonians say that their 'systems' will be in operation soon." Delays in receiving wire and instruments and the scarcity of workmen knocked their predictions into the proverbial "cocked hat."

A *Republican* item of May 23 reads: "The District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co., having received 15 coils of wire at Holyoke yesterday, say they will have through connections to Springfield by tomorrow night. They have now 50 boxes in at Holyoke, and will add transmitters to magnify the sound." This company had bought the original private line between Springfield and Holyoke and, no doubt, was going to use this to connect the two switchboards. It seems likely that the slight delay in reaching Springfield was caused by the switchboard not being ready, and that the opening date for the Holyoke exchange might have been May 24, 1879, the day they expected to have the two boards connected.

A *Transcript* article of May 24 gives the names of 52 Holyoke subscribers connected to the District Company's central office:

"The District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co., agents for the National Bell Telephone Co., commenced three weeks ago yesterday to run their wires to various points in Holyoke, and have already the following named subscribers connected with their central office.

J. W. Arnold  
Chas. E. Ball  
M. W. Bartlett  
Dr. Chas. Blodgett  
H. Bowker & Co.  
Geo. W. Burdett & Co.  
Bush & Chase  
Carter & Belden  
H. C. Carrington

Griffin, Kimball & Co.  
Holyoke Furniture Co.  
Holyoke House  
Holyoke Machine Co.  
Holyoke National Bank  
Houston & Furgerson  
Hubbard & Taber  
S. T. Lyman  
S. P. Milligan

James P. Casey	Philander Moore
Caswell Bros.	Mt. Tom Paper Co.
Chase & Cooledge	Willis P. Norton
J. J. Chesley	Parsons Paper Co.
Conn. River Freight Ofc.	B. F. Perkins
Crafts & Frazer	E. J. Pomeroy
Dr. George W. Davis	R. T. Prentiss
H. DeBill	E. D. Shaw
J. B. Farrington	Shepardson & Lucey
James Doody	F. F. Smith
E. S. Fay	John C. Smith
E. A. Fenne & Co.	H. K. Tower
F. C. Fitzgerald	Transcript Office
James Fitzgerald	Valley Paper Mill
E. P. Ford	William B. Whiting
John Gee	Windsor House
Germania Hotel	Dr. J. U. Woods

The Springfield Telephone Co., during this momentous month of May, 1879, after favoring the *Transcript* with their 'ad' of May 3rd outlining their plans for Holyoke, evidently contributed to the "Cats-cradle" which was woven over the streets. On May 16th the Springfield *Republican* reported this information: "The Springfield Telephone Co. are putting in their switchboard with 10 wires in Chase Bros. Store but it cannot be utilized until late next week. They say that 57 subscribers are secured." May 16th being Friday, late next week would be about the 23rd or 24th. On the 23rd the company made connection between their Holyoke central office and Springfield, which probably was the start of their Holyoke exchange. It was using 4 Western Union wires, and leased 1 of these to Metcalf and Luther, who formerly had service on the Springfield Holyoke private line.

It would seem from the foregoing that the two companies started their exchanges in Holyoke about the same time, the 23rd or 24th of May, 1879.

Now that "the admirable system of local telephone communication had been introduced" in Holyoke, it was proper to have an "admirable" telephone story introduced by the

*Transcript:* Hawkins' telephone box is number four. Hawkins went to bed early last evening with the determination of rising early. He heard the clock strike four, as he supposed, rose and dressed and looked at his watch to find that he was ready for breakfast at 11:30 P.M. Without any undue profanity toward telephones, Hawkins quietly undressed and crawled into bed.

Towards the end of May, the canvassers invaded Chicopee, and by June 6th the District Telephone Co. had secured thirty names and were putting up wire connections. In an ad of June 7th it promised to give their patrons the wonderful Blake Transmitter.

The commercial form of the Blake transmitter, beginning late in 1878, rapidly displaced the Berliner, and Edison types and was used for a long time as the Bell System standard.

Wires were extended from South Hadley Falls to South Hadley by the District Company, where there was a private line from the Holyoke Water Power Co.'s office to the top of Mt. Holyoke. At South Hadley Falls, a telephone was put in the meal store of George Collins in the Hampshire House block.

On July 13, 1879, the Springfield Telephone Co.'s Holyoke office was moved to quieter rooms across the street in the Parsons Hall block, lately occupied by the Reform Club—to a more uplifting atmosphere. The Company was evidently experiencing the same difficulty in their Springfield Pyncheon St. office. "Six large windows were put up yesterday over the counter to more completely shut out the street noises and keep away intruders. A small office with two telephones is to be set off by the west window for convenience of patrons. The Company has started three new wires to Holyoke. Of the seven wires out of Springfield, one drops off at Brightwood and two at Chicopee."

Chicopee Falls is heard from August 16th, thanks to the *Transcript*: "The telephones have been placed in position much to the gratification of the subscribers and the town can now communicate with the rest of the world, Holyoke included." A later item confirms that this village was served from Springfield.

The telephone lines continued to be extended and new subscribers added. In October, 1879, the Springfield Telephone Co. ran another line to West Springfield as far as Mitineague and added 11 subscribers. This Company's new catalogue of October contains over 400 names in Springfield, West Springfield, Chicopee, Chicopee Falls, Holyoke, and South Hadley Falls. The names were printed both in alphabetical and classified lists. There were 64 stations working in their Holyoke office, which was in charge of W. H. H. Santy, a skillful telegraph operator.

The telephone linemen had some amusing experiences while putting up the wires, according to a *Republican* item: "One man, whose wife had given permission for the wire to be attached to the house, threatened to cut it unless it was removed at once, saying he wasn't going to be struck by lightning. In another case, the man gave the permission and his wife ordered it down. One woman, who owned half a house which the men wished to cross, made them change the wire about an inch to get it off from her premises."

Indian Orchard was connected to the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co.'s system in April, 1880, according to the *Republican*: "The District Telephone Co. have put up a wire along the Athol Railroad to Indian Orchard and have secured 15 subscribers there for instruments which will be put in within a week."

This Indian Orchard event was also chronicled by the *Palmer Journal*: "We are getting high-toned. For a long time we have enjoyed greater advantages for the better advancement of business than many villages our size, and now, to crown all, we are to have a line of telephones from Springfield, with connections to Chicopee and Holyoke. The central office will probably be at the Athol R. R. office. (This indicates that 'central office' did not necessarily refer to an office with a switchboard). The Chapman Valve Co., the Mill Co. (the Orchard Co.) and several business men, at their homes and places of business, are to have connections. The Mill Co. will also probably have lines from their counting room to each mill, thereby saving considerable leg weariness for their clerks in delivering messages."

Ludlow, according to the *Republican* of May 28th, was then in working connection with Springfield, and lines were soon to be extended to North Wilbraham.

The District Telephone Co. in Dec., 1879, extended its lines to George P. Ellison's house at Baptist Village (Elmwood), Holyoke, and the next month installed a new switchboard at their Springfield office, similar to that in their Holyoke office, and extended a line through Water Street (Columbus Ave.) to Barney and Berry's Skate Factory. Joint usage of pole lines was mentioned Jan. 30, 1880, by the *Republican*: "The American Union Telegraph wires will reach Holyoke from Springfield in a day or two on the District Telephone poles."

Improvements in switchboards were taking place. The *Transcript* reported on Nov., 1879, that "the Holyoke switchboard has been supplied with new bars, by means of which different stations can be reached through several wires, thus preventing much of the delay which has been necessary at times." This feature probably gave the same result as adding more cords to the present magneto boards.

The Holyoke *Transcript* was established in 1863; and, at the time of these happenings, it was published Wednesdays and Saturdays at 180 High St. W. S. Loomis was the Editor and Proprietor. It started its daily appearance Oct. 9, 1882.

George F. Perkins and his brother Charles B. Perkins were given especial credit for their work in Holyoke by the *Republican* of Nov. 13, 1879: "George F. Perkins, the local manager of the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co., and his brother 'Charley', an operator, whose voice is better known than any other man's in the city, have worked the field very diligently, and made the business so far a great success. Charles spends 20 hours out of every 24 in the office, sleeping there at night with an alarm bell near his bed, so connected by an arrangement of his own invention that every call will ring it and wake him."

The Springfield Telephone Co. got a new switchboard into operation in Springfield March 1, 1880, according to the *Republican*. "It is said to be the most convenient one in the country. The operator sits in an ordinary chair and has the whole thing within easy reach, although there are now twenty-

five circuits in operation. These occupy a space only 27 inches wide, with room for a transmitter in the center. One movement of a little switch disconnects the battery and connects the operator with the required circuit, while a call from any station causes a little door to drop, revealing the number of the line. Thus all bell ringing and plugging are done away with. It allows fourteen persons to communicate at the same time and could be arranged to accommodate eighty. The arrangement was invented by A. G. Snell of New Haven and George F. Perkins of Holyoke, who have applied for a patent."

William H. French started with the Springfield Telephone Co. in March, 1880. He later wrote for *Telephone Topics* concerning his first job: "I was so small the manager asked me if I wasn't afraid of getting lost around the city. Employed as messenger, if we had a call for a person who had no telephone, I was sent to get the party, and ask them to come to the office to telephone. One night I was sent for a doctor, who had no telephone, and I kept the door bell ringing for some minutes. Suddenly, the door opened, and the doctor, scantily attired, came out, and gave me such a calling down for ringing his bell that it scared the message from my mind, and I ran back to the office without telling the doctor he was wanted."

## CHAPTER 3

### *Consolidation of the Springfield and the District Telephone Companies*

THE National Bell Telephone Co. filed suit against the agent of the American Speaking Telephone Co., Peter A. Dowd, on Sept. 12, 1878, for infringement of Bell's patents Numbers 174,465 and 186,787. The Western Union Telegraph Co. had organized this subsidiary in December, 1877, to manage the telephone business, upon which it had embarked, and assumed the defense of this suit.

The Western Union Co.'s interests, which had purchased the telephone patents of Elisha Gray, Thomas A. Edison, and Amos E. Dolbear, did not appear to be greatly disturbed by this lawsuit, for they confidently continued to advertise their claim "to own or control the fundamental inventions of every speaking telephone hitherto invented, constructed, or patented."

During the trial, which was held in Boston, the experts of the Western Union did their best to prove that other scientists had invented an electric speaking telephone before Bell. They also attempted to prove that the telephone, for which he received his basic patent, was not capable of transmitting articulate speech.

Mr. Bell was defended by two very able lawyers, whose team work and efficiency were unequalled, Chauncey Smith and James J. Storrow.

As the trial progressed, the senior counsel of the Western Union Telegraph Co., George Gifford, perceived, to his



dismay, that their small antagonist was making out a stronger case than the Western Union. When the National Bell Telephone Co. had completed its testimony, Mr. Gifford advised his clients to try to make a settlement with the Bell people. After an all night session between representatives of the Bell Company and the Western Union, an agreement was reached and both sides executed the contract, dated Nov. 10, 1879. The final decree, however, was not approved by Judge Lowell until April 4, 1881.

The terms of the settlement were as follows: The Western Union Telegraph Co. admitted that Mr. Bell was the inventor of the telephone and that his patents embraced the principles contained in the various telephones which the Western Union had been making, including transmitters employing carbon contact elements. It also stipulated that the Western Union should retire from the telephone business, and that the Bell Company receive the licenses to use their various telephone patents. The Bell Company agreed to purchase the Western Union telephones that had been made, and the telephone exchanges which they had established, and to pay the Western Union Co. for seventeen years twenty percent of all rentals or royalties from licenses or leases of telephones used in the United States. (The Western Union Co. finally turned over to the young Bell Company 56,000 telephones in 55 cities.)

In the Fall of 1876, Mr. Hubbard had offered to sell the Harmonic Telegraph and Telephone patents to the Western Union for \$100,000, but this company's officials could not see much future in it, and disregarded the offer. At that time, the first crude telephone had been spruced up with an improved transmitter, and while it worked moderately well, it was not suitable for practicable use.

Thomas Watson recounts, in his autobiography, that on June 11, 1879, during the course of the trial, a few shares of the National Bell Telephone Co. stock was bought by an optimistic investor for  $110\frac{1}{4}$  a share. On August 30, another sale was made at  $227\frac{1}{2}$ . On September 10, the price rose to 370; and then, on November 15, after the news of Bell's victory had become known, it jumped to  $977\frac{1}{2}$ ; and on Dec. 10, 1879, even though it had never paid a dividend, it sold at 995

a share. Even at that price, the value of the company's stock would have come to less than nine million dollars.

Watson also related that Bell was wont to celebrate any successful experiments with a war dance; and that he, too, had become an expert at it. If Bell and Watson had been living in their two garret rooms at No. 5 Exeter Place, Boston, when their fortunes were increasing by leaps and bounds, what a whooping and dancing there would have been! And their landlady, who once said, "I don't know what you fellows are doing up in that attic, but if you don't stop making so much noise nights and keeping my lodgers awake, you'll have to quit them rooms,"—even she might have joined them in a few capers.

It took some time to bring about the consolidation of the Western Union and Bell exchanges; and, in the meantime, there were all sorts of rumors regarding the status of the two Springfield companies. Each went merrily on its way as though nothing had occurred. However, on Oct. 27, 1879, a news item in the *Republican* cast a shadow of what was to come.

### *A Telephone Wedding*

"The consolidation of the rival telephone interests throughout the country, which was effected last week and leaves the National Bell Telephone Co. the sole proprietor, is of considerable importance to this city. By the terms of the consolidation, the Springfield Telephone Co. is given the exclusive right to the use and extension of the system in Hampden County. Locally, where its service is very satisfactory, the public will be pleased with the result."

This news was not very pleasing to the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co.'s management; for they indignantly informed the same paper that they have no intention of retiring from the local field, but, on the contrary, are preparing to enlarge their facilities here.

The final clarification did not appear in the *Republican* until July 15, 1880:

*The Telephone Consolidation Accomplished*

“The Springfield Telephone Co. yesterday bought all the rights and property of the old District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co., which sometime ago passed into the hands of the American Bell Telephone Co., and henceforth there will be but one telephone concern in Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, West Springfield, Indian Orchard, and Wilbraham. Sometime ago the plant of the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. was sold to the American Bell Co. for \$25,000 and it is now bought by the Springfield Telephone Co. for considerably less. Negotiations have been in progress for some time and the Springfield Telephone Co. finally made an offer which was at first rejected. The price asked by the American Bell Co. would have made necessary an increase of the rates of service to a point much higher than prevails in other cities. The proposition of C. A. Nichols of the local company was finally accepted by telegraph yesterday afternoon and, as soon as it is ratified by the stockholders, the two offices in Springfield will be connected.”

William J. Denver reluctantly withdrew from his beloved Telephone Company, but he continued as a Director. Frank G. Daboll was then appointed Manager.

President Frost and Superintendent Coy of the District Company had, since coming to Springfield, retained their positions with the Connecticut Company. Mr. Frost now directed his talents to organizing the Connecticut Telephone Co. and was elected General Manager, which position he continued to hold when it became the Southern New England Telephone Co.

Mr. Coy transferred his telephone activities to New York City, where he became associated with the Bankers and Merchants Telephone Co., and the United States Telephone Co. He also devoted time to new inventions and became associated with a manufacturer of interior telephone systems.

To keep their readers posted on all phases of the telephone business, the *Republican* provided the following: “The latest telephone story is that a well known downtown merchant yelled so loud through the transmitter that the man at the

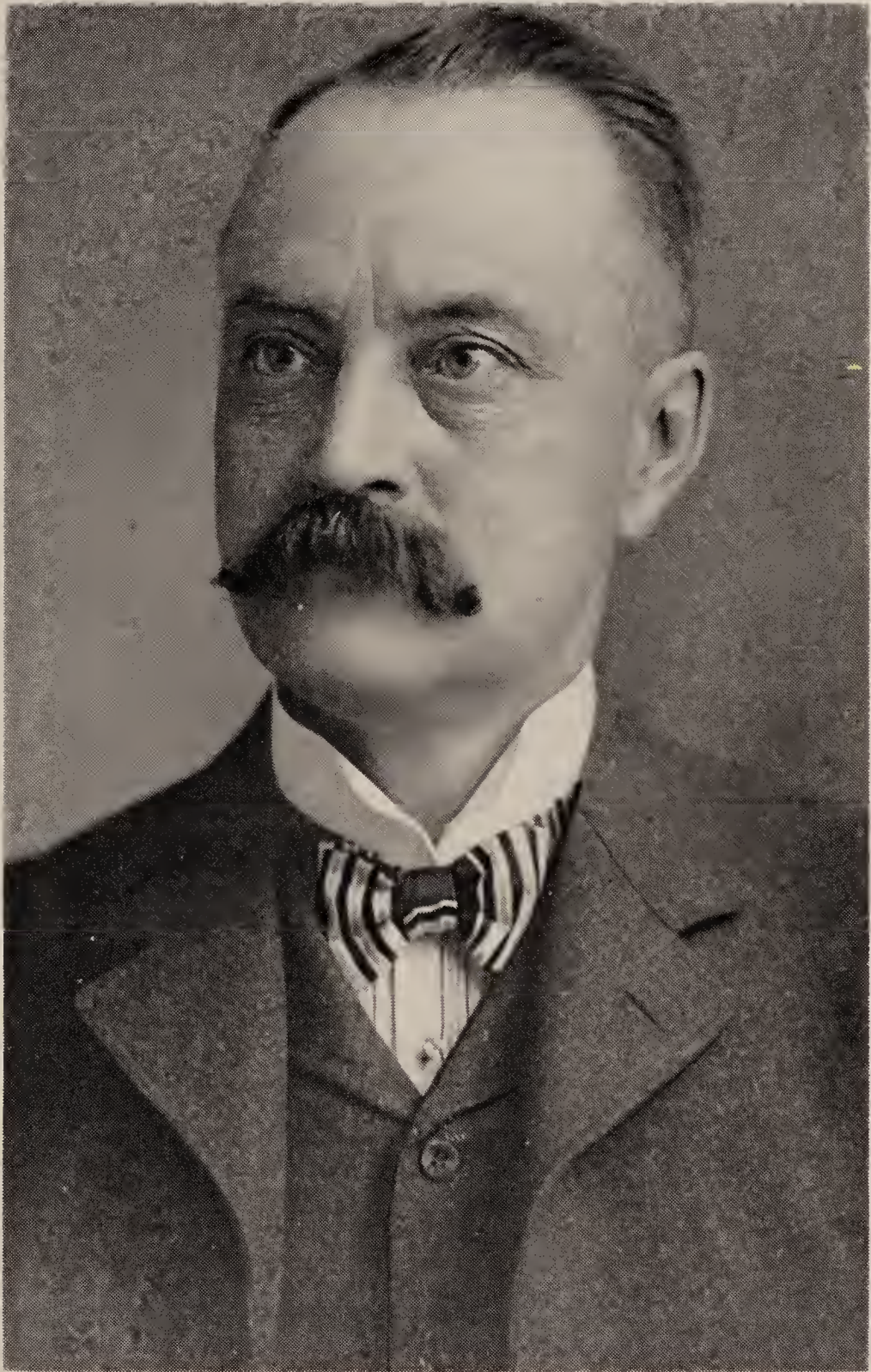
other end called back, 'Don't be so loud, you'll tear my ear off.' "

The number of subscribers belonging to each company was given in the *Republican* of July 31, 1880: "There were 406 subscribers in the city of Springfield, who patronized the Springfield Telephone Co. and 114 who were customers of the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co. In the Holyoke Exchange, the Springfield Telephone Company had 167 stations and the District Telephone had 117. Some customers had both telephones. The number of both companies' telephones in the municipalities served, were Springfield 520, Holyoke 284, Chicopee 44, Chicopee Falls 13, West Springfield 22, South Hadley Falls 19, Indian Orchard 19, Ludlow 5 and North Wilbraham 3, making a grand total of 929 telephone subscribers brought under one company, 657 having been run by the Springfield Telephone Co. and the other 272 by the District Telephone & Automatic Signal Co."

The following news accounts indicate that at first the switchboards of the two companies were merely connected, and at a later date the final separation was effected.

An item of July 31, 1880, reads: "Manager Daboll of the Springfield Telephone Co. connected the wires of the Bell and Springfield Telephone companies yesterday morning and hereafter the business will be done from the Pynchon Street Central Office. The work of hitching the numerous wires is quite a job but was completed in just 12 minutes, which put the subscribers of the Bell Company to so little inconvenience as to be hardly noticeable."

The two Holyoke switchboards were also connected in the same way on July 30th. A Holyoke item states: "In a short time, however, as soon as the switchboard in the Springfield Telephone Co.'s office is arranged for it, the 17 circuits of the other company will be brought in and all the business done at one place. The wires will be brought down the tower of the Parsons Hall Block and will make 47 circuits in all." The abandonment of the Bell Telephone office in the Perkins block, Holyoke, occurred Aug. 30, 1880. "The wires were transferred Saturday, being brought down the tower of the



FRANK G. DABOLL



Parsons block without the use of a pole. There are now 50 lines in use and about 300 stations.”

Regarding the final transfer of the Bell Company's Springfield subscribers to the Springfield Telephone Co.'s switchboard, a *Republican* excerpt of Aug. 10, 1880, states that this event was dependent upon a larger office being secured: “It is found here that two central offices do not work as well as one, and the new and larger one will be established as soon as possible.” The Springfield Telephone Co. did not move into larger quarters until March 28, 1881, and, in the meantime, other enlivening events occurred.

The quick glance at the economic situation in ‘ye olden days’, which was given in the previous chapter, overlooked a few newspaper contributions involving wages and prices:

“No members of the brick layers’ and plasterers’ protective union shall work after April 1st for less than \$2.75 a day of 10 hours, and men shall be paid every two weeks.”

“Holyoke paper folks pay their help good prices, the male hands averaging \$2.25 and the girls \$1.25 and \$1.60 per day.”

“Laborers are now getting \$1.35 a day who earned \$1.12 a year ago.”

“Coal is selling for \$7 a ton and is on the rise. Very few people have ordered their winter's supply, waiting for it to come down to \$5, where it was last year. The dealers say it is going the other way.”

“The milkmen with one accord have raised the price of the lacteal fluid from 5 to 6 cents a quart which is the usual winter rate.”

A few market prices were: butter 25 to 30 cents a pound, eggs 22 cents a dozen, raspberries 20 cents a quart. Green peas 40 and 50 cents a peck. Lamb 22 cents a pound, hindquarters, and 20 for forequarters. Farmers were charging \$2 per bushel for chestnuts.

Those fortunate to have anything left in their pocketbooks, could regale themselves at the theatre: H.M.S. Pinafore, by the local opera company; Sarah Bernhardt, in *Camille*; Tom Thumb and Wife and Company; Josh Whitcomb; Hazel

Kirke, another play of depth of human feeling; and the Orpheus Club.

There now occurred a great furore over an increase of rates, which the consolidated company proposed to put into effect Oct. 1, 1880. Quite a few lengthy articles appeared in the *Republican* from July 26th to September 27th giving the company's reasons for needing more revenue and the subscribers' reaction. A few of these will suffice to explain the various angles of this first rate encounter,—first-rate in both respects:

“There is considerable complaint because the telephone company advance their rates from \$22 to \$30 a year for residence and from \$30 to \$40 for business houses. The Company claim that they cannot run on the old terms without loss. It takes six or eight persons to answer calls at the office and a number more to put up wires, make repair, etc. The Company have to pay a certain rental in advance for every telephone which they put in. One well known business man here says that the telephone is worth \$100 a year to him, and a corporation who do an extensive business with Holyoke say they are saved more than the price of the subscription in postage alone. In Boston, they charge business places \$60 a year with 5 cents extra for every connection made, which is considered an outrage. Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis charge \$100 a year without the five cents a message charge.

“While there was a sharp competition between the two rival telephone companies, each subscriber was at liberty to place his instrument at the disposal of all his friends at any and all hours of the day. But now the company who have survived the competition are found to insist that their wires shall only be used by subscribers, their families and employees. They have found that a pretty large share of their calls have come from people who pay them nothing and they intend to insist that subscribers shall not allow outsiders to use the instruments.

“At the citizens meeting to protest an increase of telephone rates the other night, the doctors told some doleful stories. One said that happening to have a name somewhat similar to one or two other members of the profession, he had several times



been sent off to see their patients by the telephone men, and that on one occasion he was treated to a night ride to Holyoke, which proved a wild-goose chase. Then another doctor got up and said that he had lost some patronage in the same way and had also been down to the telephone office and given the operators a "cussing" for their blunders. But he had the grace to add that having stepped inside for a few minutes and seen for himself what they have to contend with from the dear public, he made up his mind that he wouldn't stay there a day for all the property which the company holds.

"The physicians and drugstores have determined to dispense with the use of their telephones after October 1 on the expiration of present leases. The doctors have 29 instruments and the druggists 7. It was felt that President Nichols might have made concessions which would have satisfied these important patrons. Families have taken the telephone largely to be in easy communication with their doctors and the action of the medical practitioners may have some effect on the general business of the company."

The next news item bore a more cheerful tone:

"The differences between the Telephone Company and the doctors and druggists have been settled so that these workers for the sick will keep their instruments. A conference with the Company resulted in the offer of concessions to the physicians, which generally satisfy them; and the druggists, who cannot well dispense with the instruments if the doctors keep them, therefore decided to keep their telephones. The Company allow the doctors to be served at the usual rate for residences where their offices are in their houses. There has been a good deal of talk about taking out the telephones by people in other callings throughout the city, and most of the prominent liverymen went so far as to sign an agreement to have the instruments removed. When the workmen came to do so, however, some of the stable-keepers decided they could not do without it, and the whole movement collapsed. Still another house had their instrument removed, but got it put back the same day upon being notified by a customer, with over \$20 a

week, that they could expect no more orders if the telephone could not be made available. In fact, though complaint may be made, people are coming to feel that the telephone has come to be a necessity.”

This concluded the rate episode, but another serious event occurred, which was probably another first of its kind: “Charles Perkins, who operates the switchboard in Holyoke alone during the day, was a good deal frightened Wednesday afternoon by finding that his voice had suddenly failed. For a couple of minutes he couldn’t utter a syllable, but while walking across the room to get some water, his voice returned as suddenly as it left him. The calls keep him talking almost constantly, and he begins to think that the vocal organs of man at least are not made for so much work.”

Miss Emma Greeley of Chicopee had been engaged as an assistant in the Holyoke Office.

It may be of interest to know that 55 telegraph wires cross Main St. from Barnes block. The network looks as if made of several hundred wires to one looking down Harrison Ave. from Chestnut Street. (*Republican* Oct. 12, 1880)

September, 1880, marked the beginning of toll line construction. The first line to be strung was that of the Western Mass. Telephone Co. from Westfield to Springfield and opened for business Sept. 17, 1880. The first dispatch from Westfield was to report the Democratic meeting in Music Hall. The fee fixed upon between the two cities was 15 cents for three minutes.

On Sept. 27, 1880, there appeared another account of a toll line: “The telephone poles are going up between Northampton and Holyoke. The route chosen is the River Road, as the Mount Tom Lumber Company will have the wires run to their mills, and one will also be run to the summit of the mountain for the Eyerie house.” On December 11, the *Republican* announced that the Northampton exchange is now connected with Holyoke, Westfield, and Springfield, and the rates will be 15 cents for five minutes.

The *Republican* announced on November 12th that the Springfield Telephone Co. had just finished another trunk line

to Holyoke, making four between the cities. This is the first time inter-exchange lines were referred to as trunk lines. The Springfield exchange had 100 circuits with over 500 subscribers, which required 6 operators.

The Company at this time started to put magneto bells on the circuits in place of those worked by a battery, as they worked better and required less care. These bells cost \$8 each, and the expense was born by the Company.

In November, 1880, the old Atlantic & Pacific telegraph lines from Springfield to Worcester were sold to the Central Mass. Telephone Co. Telephonic communication appeared to work well over them, and they were opened to the public December 6th. The charge was fixed at 35 cents, and the fees were to be collected every Monday.

Up to this time, there was no communication between Springfield and Hartford, in spite of the urgent need for it. Hope, however, was held out in the *Republican* issue of Nov. 25, 1880:

“The Connecticut Telephone Co. has a line already working from Hartford to Poquonock in Windsor, and Windsor Locks will be connected in a few days. By early December, Thompsonville and possibly Warehouse Point and Springfield will be in communication. The old Atlantic & Pacific telegraph lines, which follow the highways for some distance, will be used from Springfield several miles south.”

In the meantime, the Connecticut Company was interconnecting its exchanges, and an article of Dec. 18, 1880, reads: “The Connecticut Telephone Co. finished their connections yesterday with the local circuit, and Springfield can talk with Hartford, West Hartford, South Manchester, and Poquonock for 20 cents and with Meriden, E. Meriden, and New Britain for 30 cents. The line to Worcester is well patronized, but the through wire to Boston cannot yet be used, owing to a defect near South Framingham soon to be remedied.”

On Jan. 15, 1881, it was reported: “The telephone company now have a line to New Haven via Hartford, and conversation at 70 miles is carried on as easily as over the shorter distances.

Messages between this city and New Haven will be for the present 40 cents. This new line gives connection with offices at Birmingham (Derby) and Ansonia, Conn.”

Towns between New Haven and New York were being wired, and communication with that metropolis appeared not far off. However, the *Republican* aptly sounded a note of caution: “The only hindrance to the successful working of the line over so long a distance will be the induction, which causes the boiling or crackling noise so often heard in the telephone, and which prominent electricians are trying to overcome.”

The cost of poles in those days was unbelievably low. The *Republican* reports that the American Union Telegraph Company were using cedar poles, most of them 14 to 20 inches in diameter at the butt, and are 40 feet out of ground. They come from Canada and cost \$2 to \$3 apiece.

On Feb. 14, 1881, the Springfield Telephone Co. issued a new telephone directory with a pink cover. The patrons probably thought, at first glance, that they were receiving a valentine. It contained 56 pages and of convenient size for pocket use. The list includes 758 subscribers, 470 being on the Springfield board and 288 on the Holyoke. Special instructions are given for the use of the Edison and Bell instruments and the magneto bells.

With all these toll lines being opened in all directions, and the growth of the Springfield and Holyoke exchanges, it was evident that Springfield would become quite a telephone center within a year, necessitating a larger operating force and increased exchange facilities.

On Feb. 24, 1880, it had been announced that the office would be moved to the third story of the new Kinsman's block at the northwest corner of Main and Bridge Streets, occupying three large rooms. This location is where the Kresge Store building now stands.

A description of the new telephone office by the *Republican* follows: “The new quarters consist of three pleasant rooms in the south east corner of the block on the third floor, and they will be divided into a battery room, an office, and an operator's room. The office will have a telephone for the use of non-subscribers, who can talk without the annoyance of noise or

listeners. The battery room will contain about 360 jars of vitriol. A large frame work standard for holding the wires from all directions, has been built on top of the block and, within it, is the cable house from whence the wires run down into the operator's room."

March 28, 1881, was the date of the opening of the new office, and the *Republican* had this to say about the notable event:

"The Telephone Company are now in their new quarters, where they have probably one of the best furnished and most convenient offices in the country. The removal was effected with little trouble or confusion, and there have been comparatively few delays in answering calls. Subscribers are asked to be patient for a few days until the young women become familiar with the intricacies of the new switchboard." "Charley" Perkins, veteran operator at Holyoke, was the instructor of the new operators. They were Lizzie A. Lane, niece of W. J. Denver, Mary O. White, and Mrs. Guy Carleton, wife of a subsequent manager.

It will be noted that the soft spoken and courteous fair sex have come into their own. Springfield and Holyoke were fortunate to have had such capable and responsible male operators as Charles B. Perkins, Arthur Lincoln and John L. Perkins.

The Springfield fire department had their fire stations connected to one telephone line in September. No one was permitted to use the line but members of the fire department. The ring numbers were No. 1, Central Office; 2, Mt. Tom hose; 3, Reliance; 4, Relief; 5, Emerald; 31, Police Station. One long ring denoted a fire alarm.

In May Charles B. Perkins, alias "Charley," was appointed Manager of the Holyoke office, a promotion which he richly deserved. George F. Perkins, former Manager, was promoted to telephone Superintendent at Springfield. He resigned about 1883 to enter the electrical business in Holyoke.

In June of 1881, Holyoke had reached about 300 subscribers, with five lines to Springfield. About 200 calls a month were being made between Holyoke and Northampton each

way. There were three operators in the Holyoke office besides the messenger, and business was so brisk all night that the night boy no longer could enjoy a few winks of sleep between calls. The novelty of the telephone was nearly gone, not many calls being made for the fun of it.

Individual lines were furnished in Holyoke, at this time, to the Whiting, Holyoke, and Massasoit paper companies, H. N. Farr, Nash & Holmes, W. R. Fullerton, M. W. Bartlett, Windsor Hotel, and the city stables.

The formation of the Hampden Telephone Co. is described in Chapter 8, which involves the Springfield and Holyoke exchanges.

## CHAPTER 4

# *Start of the Pittsfield and North Adams Exchanges*

### PITTSFIELD EXCHANGE

THE introduction of the telephone to the Berkshires May 12, 1877, was advertised in the Pittsfield Newspapers in a manner well calculated to attract the eye:

CITY HALL SPRINGFIELD

AND

ACADEMY OF MUSIC

PITTSFIELD

UNITED BY

TELEPHONE!

Saturday Eve'g.,

May 12th

Words and Music Over 50

Miles of Wire

Two Audiences Hearing Together

#### PROGRAMME

1. Opening explanation by Mr. Frederic A. Gower, Manager of the Telephone Exhibition.
2. Cornet and Organ Solos, and vocal solos and duets, through the telephone from Westfield, for both audiences.

3. Informal tests and conversation between citizens of Springfield and Pittsfield.

Admission 35 cents

Reserved seats 50 cents

Tickets on sale at S. E. Nichol's Book Store  
on Thursday morning

The papers also played up the coming attraction in a praiseworthy manner. Following are two excerpts from the write ups which appeared in the *Pittsfield Sun*:

“The lectures are expensive and the prices of admission have been placed very low to give all a chance to see this most wonderful of modern inventions.” “All may have a chance on Saturday evening to hear the first telephone ever invented. It will be parallel in interest to witnessing the first trip of Fulton's steamboat or the passage of the first railroad train.”

An admirable account of this first performance of the telephone in the Berkshires was published in the *Pittsfield Sun*:

“We do not envy the man who could for the first time listen to music 40 miles away and to conversation between parties 50 miles distant from each other without the most profound feeling, aside from any pleasure derived from what was played or what was said. At Springfield, as the papers of that city report, the experiments were as perfectly successful as was expected by reasonable persons, considering the present stage of the invention, and the large audience—some 1400—received them with constant and hearty applause. The operator was stationed at Westfield and the ten miles of intervening wire were soldered at the joints instead of being merely twisted together as is the 40 miles between Westfield and Pittsfield, so that the results here were less satisfactory although highly interesting. The first were a series of tunes upon a reed organ and were performed with the aid of a voltaic battery, such as is commonly used in telegraphing, and was managed by Mr. Robinson of the Western Union Telegraph Co. The tunes were heard with great distinctness and some of the more famil-



iar ones were recognized in all parts of the hall. The connection with the battery was then broken, and what effects followed were produced solely by the action of the voice impinging upon a thin steel plate about the size of a half dollar, and surrounded by coils of insulated wire. These results were not so marked as was expected by either the audience or Mr. Gower, the exhibitor; which he attributed to the "swinging off" of the single wire used in the experiments so as to touch or approach some other wire or a tree; but it was no doubt due in part, at least, from the imperfect joints. Songs, or at least some notes of them, and also of a cornet solo, both performed in Westfield, were heard throughout the hall. Mr. Gower also carried on conversation easily with Mr. Watson at Westfield and Prof. Bell in the City Hall at Springfield. Only the hailing sounds "hoy! hoy!" were heard by the audience distinctly. The purport of the conversation was to urge upon Messrs. Bell and Watson efforts to make the music more audible here. The responses, however, grew more and more feeble until about half past 9 o'clock, when they ceased altogether. We suggest as an explanation that Prof. Bell had become negatively charged; at any rate he refused to be rung, not a tinkle. The audience dispersed, disappointed in some particulars, yet gratified to have been among the first to have heard in Pittsfield sounds produced in Springfield and Westfield, and to have witnessed in its infancy what promises to be perhaps the most wonderful invention of the age, and so to be able better to comprehend the accounts of its development. The explanations of Mr. Gower were very clear and entertaining. About 300 persons were present, not enough to pay expenses."

George H. Cary, the principal of the First Grammar School in Pittsfield, was the sponsor of the exhibition both here and in Springfield. The good attendance at Springfield failed to make up financially for the small audience in the Berkshires.

The *Springfield Daily Republican* of June 22, 1877, reported that George H. Cary, the First Grammar School teacher, has hired a large house in Nantucket, which is his

home, and will make it the stopping place of Pittsfield visitors to the island this summer. It is hoped that the results of his first telephone venture did not oblige him to take summer boarders to repair his losses.

Mr. Cary's interest in the telephone was not dimmed, however, for it wasn't long before he became the Bell telephone agent for Berkshire County. He was assisted in this endeavor by a Mr. Arnold so that he was able to continue as principal of the grammar school.

The sale of Bell telephones for private lines seemed to be flourishing, according to these two items which appeared in the *Republican* Nov. 4, and Dec. 2, 1878: "George H. Cary, the Bell Telephone agent, is to unite the mill of C. J. Kettridge & Co. in Dalton with the line running from Hinsdale depot to the Plunkett Woolen Co.'s mill, making nearly two miles of wire. There is a good prospect that the line will soon be run as far down as Cranesville."

"George H. Cary who has put up a good many Bell telephones in the County the past summer, is confident that next season will see a much greater increase. There is talk of a line from Hinsdale depot to the Ashmere reservoir; D. C. Smith of Dalton is thinking of one from his office near the depot to his mill. Hinsdale already has a line with five stations in successful operation, with the prospect of its continuance to Cranesville. F. A. Schermerhorn of Lenox has an underground line between his house and stables. Col. Anchmuty talks of private line, and Mr. Cary thinks that next summer's influx of city residents at Lenox will make the demand for them considerable, with the probability of their extension to Stockbridge."

Boltwood's *History of Pittsfield* says the first commercial installation here was between the Pontoosuc Mill and the Pittsfield National Bank in March, 1878.

The *Berkshire County Eagle*, of Sept. 4, 1951, has this enlivening excerpt: "William Larkin, North Street Clothier, rather believes his grandfather, Samuel Payne, had the first home phone here, connecting his farm at Taylor Street and South with his livery stable in town on McKay Street. Mr. Larkin well remembers a story told by his grandmother in this

connection. A peddler stopped one morning at the stable to sell strawberries. His grandfather said wait a minute, he'd ask his wife. He cranked up the wall phone, talked into the mouth-piece, hung up and said no.

"The peddler was furious at my grandfather," says Mr. Larkin, "because he thought the old gentleman wanted him to believe his wife was inside the box."

A novel scheme of connecting telegraph and telephone instruments to the same line is described in the *Republican* of February 14th: "The private telegraph line which half a dozen men have had in operation, for amusement partially, for two years or more, has resulted in the organization of the District Telegraph Co. by W. K. Rice and W. G. Morton. Telegraphic or telephonic connections are to be made between the residences of members and the police headquarters, fire department, and the stores and offices. Six offices have already been opened, five more applications have been received, and the company hope before Spring to have 20 offices. The terms are \$3 a year for the use of the wire."

There was some question whether Morse instruments and telephones would work on the same line, but they evidently did, for by May 1st the organization had 26 instruments in use, a few being Bell telephones which were furnished for \$16 per year. It was also made known that with additions to their patronage the company would soon organize an exchange.

Mr. Rice was evidently impressed by this new means of communication and decided to sell his interests in several drug stores and take over the Bell telephone franchise in Fall River, where a list of 100 subscribers had been obtained by another party who did not have the means to go ahead with the business. The management of the District Telegraph Co., therefore, devolved upon Mr. Morton, who acquired his partner's interest in the company.

The prospect of a company starting an exchange, and using Bell instruments, may have hastened the entrance into the field of another interested party. Anyhow, this news was announced in the *Eagle* of May 8, 1879: "The Western Union Telegraph Co. is organizing through their agent, F. W. Robinson, a district telephone system in this town, by which lines

from offices, stores, and residences will connect with the main office, and place all subscribers in communication with each other, a very convenient arrangement for calling physicians, police, merchants, livery etc. when they may be needed. About 40 subscribers have already been obtained and the requisite 50 will soon be secured. The Company puts in the machines and wires and charges each subscriber \$22 a year. Messrs. Rice and Morton's District Telegraph combination has about 20 offices and so between the two, the wires will be plenty in Pittsfield." An office was being fitted up in the basement of the Berkshire Insurance building with an entrance on West Street.

It didn't take long for Manager Robinson to secure the 50 applications, the list getting quite a boost from the offices in the Insurance building.

The *Sun* on May 22nd carried this item: "The Western Union District Telegraph has 62 subscribers and 12 miles of wire has been ordered which will be put up as soon as possible after it is received. It will cost about \$2500 for machines, wire etc."

It wasn't very often that the appearance of telephone instruments was alluded to, but this feature wasn't overlooked by the *Berkshire County Eagle*: "The new telephones of the Western Union Co. and the Bell Company are beautiful specimens of workmanship and they are reduced to the smallest compass and the handiest possible arrangement for use. An elegant wall bracket will contain the entire machinery."

On July 10, 1879, the *Berkshire County Eagle* gave its readers a few last minute pointers and appended a list of those who were at that date anticipating being connected with the telephone exchange. There are not many of these early lists extant, and it seems fitting to add these names to the Pittsfield Honor Roll:

"In a few days the telephone exchange will be ready for public use or at least for the use of subscribers. The list of those who may be telephonically communicated with is as follows:

"Pittsfield Coal Gas Co. works and office; Henry W. Taft, residence; Berkshire Life Ins. Co., office; Drs. Paddock and

Adams, residences; Dr. Bailey's residence; T. Clapp's residence; Willard Bros., Drugstore; Dr. Wentworth's residence; Perkins and Searle, Boston Branch Store; M. Gleason's Market; A. B. Root's residence; Dr. Vermilye's residence; R. W. Adams' residence; J. L. Russell's livery; James Wilson's residence; D. M. Collin's residence; Pittsfield National Bank and Cashier Francis' residence; M. P. Lawton & Son's coal office; J. T. Power's store; C. C. Gamwell's coal office; S. W. Tillotson's livery; J. M. Barker's residence; Burbank Hotel; John Hurd's market; F. Nickerson & Son's Market; Geo. W. Smith & Son's Grocery store; American House; F. W. Hinsdale's residence; Henry Chickering's residence; Robbins & Kellogg's factory; L. L. Atwood's store and residence; S. Payne's livery; B. C. Blodgett's Music school; H. T. Morgan's residence; Pontoosuc Woolen Co.'s office; G. R. Lowden's market; A. Kennedy's residence; Geo. Y. Learned's residence; Academy of Music; S. E. Nichol's book store; W. H. Cooley's store; H. L. Dawes' residence; Mrs. Pollock's residence; E. M. Wood's residence; J. L. Peck's residence and mill; L. A. Stevens' & Co., store; Express Office; Boston and Albany depot; F. G. Robinson's residence; Bel Air Mfg. Co.; E. McA. Learned's residence; F. W. Brandow's dental office; Berkshire Fire Ins. Co.'s office; County Jail; Butler Merrill & Co., lumber yard; Wm. Clarks's Co.'s machine shops; E. D. Jones' residence; Court House; Murphy's livery stable; Springside Summer Boarding House."

The Pittsfield exchange was opened Aug. 4, 1879, according to both the *Eagle* and the *Republican*. The *Berkshire County Eagle* gives a graphic description in its Aug. 7th edition, it being a weekly paper in those days, of large dimensions and having four pages of fine print:

"Hello there!" A man passing the new room just opened in the basement of the insurance building on West Street heard the words shouted, and supposing he was called, stopped. "Hello!" "What's wanted?" "Hello!" "What station is calling?" "Who is it?" the voice went on and the stranger perhaps thinking the place was a lunatic hospital, went down the steps

to investigate. It was only Mr. Benjamin Chickering, in the central office of the "telephone system," attending to the "calls."

"The system went into operation on Monday (Aug. 4th) with 65 stations on 13 circuits, the remotest being at Pontoosuc at the North and Mrs. Pollock's at the East.

"Each "station" office, store or residence having a telephone, is furnished with a list of the subscribers, all of whom are designated by numbers. When a subscriber wishes to speak with another he presses a button on his telephone a number of times corresponding with the number of his office (telephone), and that rings a bell on his circuit in the central office the same number of times. Mr. Chickering puts his telephone in connection, asks "what's wanted," calls "hello," or by some word lets the caller know he is ready to receive the message. The caller tells Mr. Chickering who he wishes to talk with, a connection is made after summoning the person desired, and the two, though perhaps a mile apart, are united by the wire and chat at their leisure, give orders or transact any business they may have.

"But few private families can afford \$22 a year for such a luxury and the number of subscribers will be limited and the profit to merchants and others small until the price is reduced. Manager Robinson says the company makes little or nothing above expenses at present."

The Springfield *Daily Republican* refers to the central office as being in a convenient and tastefully fitted up room with a telephone and transmitter there for the free use of the public. Also that the battery room adjoins the central office, and there are 175 cells of battery. Charles Silvernail is mentioned as the night operator, and there was some talk of extending the line to Bakerville.

The new central office was next to the Western Union Telegraph office so that Mr. Robinson could administer the affairs of both offices without too much locomotion. The number of subscribers had reached 70 by August 26th, and the wires had been extended to both freight offices, depot, telegraph, and express offices. Telephones were also put in the Renfrew Mills,

their office at the Bradley Mill, and Smith, Mole & Co.'s store.

A few news items, taken from the *Pittsfield Sun*, touch on sundry subjects of local interest.

A man in town is sure, since the telephone has come out, that the world will come to an end this year.

Pittsfield has the largest population living under one town government in the United States. Does it sound smarter to be called the largest town in the country or the smallest city?

An official in the Pittsfield fire department has just sacrificed chin whiskers  $44\frac{1}{4}$  inches long, the growth of many years. (It may be that they had reached a point where he was stepping on them going up a ladder.)

Butter is down to 20 and 22 cents per lb. It's a long while since butter has melted down to these figures.

On Nov. 17, 1879, there appeared this rather surprising news in the *Republican*:

“Principal George H. Cary has bought the Pittsfield telephone exchange, established a few months ago by the Western Union Telegraph Co. but it does not affect his connection with the schools, and there will be no change in the central office. Mr. Cary has been the local agent of the Bell Telephone Co. for some time.”

What is known of Mr. Cary's earlier life comes from Mr. Charles Clark Coffin, Town Clerk of the town of Nantucket, Mass., incorporated 1671: Cary, George H., son of James S., Mariner, and Margaret Hussey of Nantucket, born May 31, 1847, in Nantucket.

Marriages. July 27, 1869, George Howard Cary, Age 22, School teacher, and Mary Gardner Folger, age 21 at Nantucket.

According to the press, Mr. Cary had been in the school department of Pittsfield seven years, and the *Pittsfield Sun* attested to his pedagogic proficiency: “George H. Cary, principal of the Pittsfield First Grammar School, attended the Boston examination for grammar school masters early in April (1879) where his examination in 25 studies lasted three days. This morning he received his notice that he had been granted

a certificate of qualification by this most thorough educational examining board for teachers in this country.”

A change in the location of the central office took place on Feb. 7, 1880, it being moved to the third floor of the Insurance Building and a messenger service established. One of the reasons for the change was the need of the company's battery room by the Western Union Co.

Pittsfield's population in 1880 was 13,364. It was a prosperous textile town and the county seat of Berkshire County. The Berkshire Life Insurance building was its only skyscraper, towering upwards four stories. The Academy of Music (now the Miller building), a theatre above the average, stood on the East side of North St., south of the railroad. The House of Mercy Hospital and the Athenaeum, which contained the library, the Berkshire Historical and Scientific Association and a room for lectures, concerts and art displays, had been established only a few years previously. The shores of Pontoosuc Lake were unblemished by cottages; and Onota Lake could boast only the summer homes of Pickering Clark and W. C. Allen.

There was no street railway in 1880, the horse drawn vehicles not appearing until July 3, 1886.

Pittsfield, being high in the Berkshires, where the atmosphere was more refined, naturally partook of a higher order of entertainment, than did its neighbors on the lower reaches of the Connecticut river. Boltwood's *History of Pittsfield* lists some of the intellectual and cultural interests of 1876:

“Among the popular entertainments, lectures were conspicuous—amateur theatrical performances seem to have been frequent—lovers of classical music were gratified by numerous concerts; and at the theatre might be seen several of the best actors of the period—public balls and masquerades were much in vogue—in sleighing time, hardly a week passed without an excursion of a large party to Lanesborough, or Cheshire, Lenox or Lee, for a supper and a dance at the village hotel.

“Nor should public amusements of less importance be forgotten—the itinerant Punch-and-Judy shows at the Park, for



example, occasionally accompanied by a melancholy bear; the street auctions on West's corner; the traveling circuses which encamped on the small pasture at the North-east corner of Wendell Avenue and East Housatonic Street; the races and baseball games at the Pleasure Park; the Swiss Bell-ringers and the Bohemian glass-blowers at West's or Burbank's Hall; and the exhibitions, two or three years later, of strange amusing and useless toys called the phonograph and the telephone."

The next telephone event involving Pittsfield was of such magnitude that a special chapter must be devoted to it—Chapter 5. Prior to this, however, attention must be given to the fair towns of North Adams and Adams, situated at the foot of Mt. Greylock.

#### NORTH ADAMS EXCHANGE

Mention of somebody planning a telephone exchange in North Adams was made in the *Pittsfield Sun* as early as April 9, 1879: "There is talk of a grand telephone company, night and day watchman, a system of fire alarms, and other useful and needful things, all of which will probably end in talk."

The last observation was not very complimentary to the progressive spirit of the "tunnel city," and, as it happened, North Adams got its telephone system working nearly two months before Pittsfield did; but it had only a day "watchman" to start with.

The telephone interests must have adopted the motto *facta non verba* (deeds, not words) judging by the ensuing events. Only ten days had passed when this surprising news appeared in the *Springfield Republican*: "There are already 25 subscribers to the telephone circuit at North Adams and it will be begun when 50 have been obtained. The line will include Blackington, Briggsville, Houghtonville, the Union, and the projector is confident that 100 will join as the circuit is begun."

On May 1, 1879, the *Adams Transcript*, an eminent newspaper published weekly in North Adams, and still using the name it took when North Adams was a part of the town of Adams, reported still greater achievements: "The district telephone company has been organized (April 30) and the

central office, in the rear of A. W. Richardson's office, Holden St., will be in charge of George C. Millard. About 30 members have been obtained, and probably more will join when the advantages of the system become appreciated."

On May 15th, the same paper reported the following news: "The wires for the new telephone company are being put up and the system will be in operation within a few days." It was also reported that a movement was on foot to connect North Adams with the Renfrew, W. C. Plunkett and L. L. Brown Mills by telephone. These important industries were situated in Adams.

The North Adams exchange was opened for business Monday, June 9, 1879. The *Republican* reported the event in these words: "The District Telephone Co. opened their office and formally began business yesterday. There are 33 subscribers to begin with and some of these are using the Blake transmitter." (The Bell Company's answer to the Western Union Telegraph Co.'s Edison carbon transmitter.) And on June 23rd the same resourceful paper secured this information: "The District Telephone Co. have 40 subscribers and 6 circuits and a 7th is to be put up soon. The company are to put in the Boston hook call bell, the ones already in use not working very well." This improved call bell was, no doubt, the one Thomas Watson invented in Boston late in 1878.

George C. Millard was the projector and manager of the telephone exchange. Prior to this, the business directory listed his business as that of "Electric bells," which showed he was well adapted to his new venture.

William F. Orr also played a prominent role in the affairs of the new company. The North Adams *Evening Transcript* of June 29, 1934, furnished the following information regarding Mr. Orr's early career. He started to work as a messenger boy for the Western Union Telegraph Co. when thirteen years of age, and in a few years he left Drury Academy to take a position as a telegraph operator. He and George Millard received from the Bell Company a franchise to establish and operate a telephone system in "Northern Berkshire and Northern New York except Albany."

Although employed by the Western Union Telegraph Co.,

young Orr found time to help his friend establish the telephone exchange in North Adams, and a few months after the beginning he bought a half interest in the business. In 1880, Mr. Orr became manager of the local Western Union office. The duties he was able to perform for the telephone company, without relinquishing his telegraph connections, were truly remarkable, and were summed up in the *Evening Transcript* as follows: "Mr. Orr served as manager, installer, operator, trouble-shooter, lineman and, as he sometimes said, explainer and apologizer for the infant telephone system, devoting all the time that he could take from his duties with Western Union to selling telephones to new subscribers, making their installations and maintaining their service."

A glowing account of the telephone situation in North Adams appeared in the *Adams Transcript* of Aug. 14, 1879: "The Telephone Co. are extending their business in all directions. Braytonville, Briggsville and Blackington are now on the line and it is probable that it will be extended to Williamstown and North Pownal. Even the Stamford people talk of having it brought to them, and a meeting is to be held soon to decide whether they can afford the expense of erecting poles between Briggsville and their town. There is quite a rivalry between this town and Pittsfield as to who will do the largest telephone business, and as the number of subscribers in each town is about the same, and the proposed extensions of the home line are highly probable, it looks as though North Adams would win in the race. There has been talk of having communication between this town and Pittsfield and between the latter place and Springfield. If this should be brought about, it is not improbable that within a year or two North Adams business men will be able to sit in their offices at home and talk telephonically with the business men of Boston."

Another *Transcript* item, in a way, bears upon this telephone subject. "The soda fountain at Rice Brothers' drug store is in full blast, dispensing the usual cooling beverages, including mineral waters." This is quite interesting, except for the mineral waters, because it was W. K. Rice of this firm who left Pittsfield to start the telephone system in Fall River.

The question of a fire alarm system now presented itself and turned out to be quite a factor in the life of the town. The *Republican* of Aug. 12, 1879, introduced the subject: "The committee of the fire district appointed to see about a fire-alarm have had interviews with Manager Millard of the telephone company and are quite in favor of adopting his plan. The cost will be only about \$150 and the committee are waiting for the return of two members who are absent on vacation."

The *Transcript* of Sept. 4th presented additional evidence of the town's progressive spirit in these words: "The telephonic fire alarm system has been adopted and went into operation Monday night (September first), someone being in the telephone central office all the time, including Sundays. The night manager (operator) is Wm. Spear. The town will be divided into districts, a system of whistle signals be arranged, and full particulars and instructions will probably be published next week."

The next week there appeared a full explanation under the heading of—

### *The Fire Alarm System*

The telephonic fire alarm system, recently adopted by the prudential committee, needs a little explanation. The wires of the telephone company now extend nearly all over the town, so that an alarm can be easily sounded if the discoverer of the fire understands just how to act. The following furnishes all needed information, and should be cut out and preserved, especially on account of the list of places where the alarm may be given.

The town has been divided into four districts. The person discovering a fire should go at once to the nearest telephone station and inform the owner of the telephone, who calls up the operator in the central office, cries "Fire" twice, as plainly as possible, and then tells him the location of the fire. The operator will ring the electric bells in the boiler rooms of the two print works, and the engineers will at once sound the general alarm. Afterwards the engineers will learn from the central office the location of the fire and then blow the signal

for that district. For instance, the fire being in district No. 3 the engineer will blow his whistle three times.

Where the telephones are located:

Ashland Street—E. A. Rand's office; Braytonville—North Adams Mfg. Co.'s office; Beaver—Beaver Mill Office; Briggsville—Briggs Brothers office, A. A. Lee's store; Blackinton—Blackinton Woolen Co. office; Center Street—Geo. C. Millard's residence; Church Street—S. Blackinton's, Rev. A. C. Osborn's, Wm. Arthur Gallup's, E. S. Wilkinson's residences; Church Street—N. H. Arnold's residence; Eagle Street—S. W. Brayton's residence, Clark & Olds' store; Holden Street—Central Telephone office, J. A. Bond's livery office, E. A. Bond's, J. H. Mabbett's residences; Johnson's ground—Johnson's store, S. Johnson's residence; Marshall Street—Arnold Print Works boiler room, Arnold Print Works office, C. T. Sampson Mfg. Co. office; Holbrook Street—J. H. Orr, Jr., residence; Main Street—Adams Club Room, Dr. Stafford's office, Wilson House, Adams National Bank, Berkshire National Bank, J. H. Flagg's livery office, Boston Branch Store, C. H. Berry's livery office, J. H. Orr's residence, Jas. Hunter & Son's office, M. D. & A. W. Hodge's mill, N. H. Arnold's store; Pleasant Street—R. G. Walden's residence; Quincy Street—Wm. Martin's residence; River Street—W. W. Freeman & Co's office; South Street—W. B. Walden's office; State Street—Richmond House, C. H. Cutting & Co's store, David Roberts' music rooms, H. W. Brown & Co.'s office, Troy and Greenfield Freight office, Express office, S. B. Dibble's office; Summer Street—W. W. Freeman's, A. C. Houghton's, A. W. Hodge's residence; Union Street—Freeman Print Works office, J. B. Tyler's residence, Eclipse Mill, Glen Woolen Mill office.

The following newspaper article starts out in a promising manner but the theme soon deviates from the telephone subject: "The telephone, electric light and all the wonders of the century are put in the shade by the discovery made by a well educated German farmer in Dakota, that by feeding a cow on hops, malt and corn, in the right proportion, she can be made to produce the best quality of lager beer."

The expanding telephone business must have created quite

a hubbub in the rear of Mr. Richardson's office, and it is not surprising to read the following item in the Feb. 12, 1880, *Transcript*: "The telephone company are fitting up an office in the Transcript block, on Bank St., and expect to occupy it in about two weeks. It will have many advantages over the old location. The front room will be fitted up with desk, chairs etc., for the use of patrons, but the operating room will be kept sacred for business. A transmitter will be placed in the public room, connecting with the switchboard, but in the operating room there will be no transmitters, all messages being sent by telephone. The company will not put in the magneto call bells at present, until they see how Mr. Bliss' invention, which claims to avoid the ringing of any bell on a circuit except the one needed, succeeds. They are the second company applying for this invention."

The *Transcript* mentioned that the office of the telephone company was moved on Sunday (Feb. 22, 1880), to the Transcript block. The work was begun Saturday, but subscribers were put to little inconvenience. The managers put a large force of men on the job, and with the assistance of the professional "line man," rushed the work of removal.

North Adams, according to the 1880 United States census, had a population of 10,192. It had separated from the mother town of Adams in April, 1878, by act of the legislature, on account of the diverse interests of the villages and the inconvenience to voters.

It was principally a textile town and held promise of being the great railroad town of Western Massachusetts, as four railroads had their terminal facilities there. The Hoosac Tunnel,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  miles long, had been built by the state at a cost of about 18 millions, and the railroads paid tolls for their trips under Hoosac Mountain.

Hoosac Tunnel was opened to railroad passenger traffic in 1876. Its construction had extended over 25 years, several earlier attempts having failed. Toward the end of the 1860's nitro glycerin was developed and first used to blast the solid rock formation of Hoosac Mountain. George M. Mowbray, an operative chemist, was called from the oil fields of Pennsylvania to take charge of the production of this dangerous

substance, which common carriers refused to transport, and to devise methods for its use. He was referred to in the *Transcript* quite frequently as "Prof. Mowbray."

To travel from Boston to Troy, one rode over the tracks of several railroad companies: The Fitchburg Railroad Co., The Troy & Greenfield Railroad Co., The Troy & Boston Railroad Co., and The Boston, Hoosac Tunnel & Western Railroad Co. These roads now form the Boston-Troy line of the Boston & Maine system, and in those days by renting one another's trackage a through line was established between Albany and Boston, popularly known as the "Tunnel" road, and trains made the run from Albany to Boston in about six hours. A new Union Depot was opened about the time the telephone exchange was started and attracted many visitors.

The Pittsfield & North Adams Railroad, the Housatonic Railroad and others combined to provide transportation to New York City.

The opening of schools in the fall of 1881 found Drury High School with an attendance of 90 pupils, and Drury Academy with 983. This latter institution was a private school with several dormitories and later was acquired by the city for the enlargement of Drury High.

The progress of the telephone in North Adams and Adams is continued in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Western Massachusetts Telephone Company Pittsfield - North Adams - Adams Exchanges*

#### PITTSFIELD EXCHANGE

GEORGE H. CARY now began to demonstrate that venture-some spirit, which he inherited from his seafaring ancestors of Nantucket Island. When he bought the Pittsfield Telephone exchange from the Western Union Telegraph Co., he, no doubt, had in mind the larger undertaking which he and his associates were soon to initiate.

The enormity of this venture, which finally came to light in the *Republican's* issue of Feb. 17, 1880, must have put a severe strain on the imagination of the Berkshire folks.

#### *A Big Telephone Scheme*

Manager George H. Cary has just received a concession from the Bell Telephone Co. for all the territory west of the Connecticut river, which includes Westfield, Northampton, Greenfield, Shelburne Falls, Pittsfield, North Adams, Great Barrington, and Lee for large towns, while only Pittsfield and North Adams are occupied. The plan is to connect the towns by trunk lines, over which messages can be sent for a small fee. A stock company with a capital of \$100,000 is now being formed under the lead of Pittsfield parties, with 1,000 shares at \$100 each, to put up the necessary lines etc. The North Adams circuit was sold yesterday to Manager Cary, who bought



the Pittsfield circuit some months ago. It is thought that the stock will be taken in a short time.

The same article announced that the Pittsfield telephone central office was removed to the third floor of the Berkshire Insurance building Saturday night, Feb. 14, 1880.

T. P. Tobey had been engaged to float the stock issue, and in one day stock to the amount of \$9,000 was subscribed at Pittsfield, which, with the stock accepted by the former owners of the Pittsfield and North Adams companies, made about \$20,000. The original stock issue was reduced to \$40,000 which was deemed sufficient to get started. Lewis Warner and Frank Edwards of Northampton were appointed to take subscriptions for the stock in Hampshire County. It was preferred that the stock be sold where they proposed to do business.

On March 9th an item in the *Republican* gave the joyful news that the \$40,000 of the capital stock had been subscribed.

The Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. was incorporated April 14, 1880, with the following officers and directors: W. B. Rice, President; Wellington Smith, Vice President; C. C. Francis, Treasurer; George H. Cary, General Manager, and R. H. W. Dwight, Clerk; Directors: W. B. Rice, W. Smith, G. H. Cary, S. S. Potter, J. T. Power, S. F. Root, and J. L. Wariner. Mr. Cary engaged offices over John T. Power's store, West Street, Pittsfield, while the central office of the Pittsfield exchange remained at room 28, Berkshire Life Building. Mr. Cary also relinquished his position as Principal of the First Grammar School.

The new company, having taken over the Pittsfield and North Adams exchanges, now proceeded to fulfill its promise to extend service throughout the two counties. According to the *Republican* of April 28, 1880: "The Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. yesterday voted to begin work immediately on the line between North Adams and Pittsfield, 20 miles, and appropriated about \$2,000 for the purpose. They also voted to begin the canvass for subscribers in Southern Berkshire towns, preparatory to establishing a trunk line between them and Pittsfield, and the forming of exchanges. Manager Cary is to have charge of the buying of all supplies and will superintend the building of the lines."

On June 5th telephonic communication between Pittsfield and North Adams was quite successfully carried on for the first time between the two telegraph offices over the telegraph wires, though there was considerable induction.

The line which had been run as far as the Renfrew Co.'s mill in Dalton was to be extended to Hinsdale for a few prospective customers.

A line to Lenox was started June 26, 1880, and on Sept. 1st the *Republican* announced its completion: "Lenox has been connected with Pittsfield by telephone, with the principal station for nonsubscribers in the former town being at Curtis's hotel. There are nine subscribers there, and they will be worked as Hinsdale and Dalton subscribers are, as a circuit from the Pittsfield central office."

It is of interest to learn that the Western Mass. Tel. Co. was represented at the first telephone convention, which took place Sept. 6, 1880, under the name of the National Telephone Exchange Association. The *Republican* furnished part of the story: "The Western Mass. Tel. Co. will be represented at the Niagara Falls convention next week by President W. B. Rice, Manager Cary, and George H. Bliss, the latter's invention of individual calls by means of clock work being put to a crucial test there, for which Mr. Bliss is now making three machines."

In regard to this convention, the *Hampshire Gazette* of Sept. 28th, had a more illuminating report: "Young as the telephone is in years, it has extended interests enough to need a convention of its makers, vendors, and operators, which was recently held at Niagara Falls. More than 20 companies united in the call which was for the purpose of considering the subjects of trunk tolls, local tolls, rentals, submarine and underground wires, modes of constructing lines, and other matters of related interest."

George H. Bliss, referred to above, was a resourceful and prolific inventor, who resided in Pittsfield and devoted much of his thought to the improvement of the telephone. Back in Aug. 15, 1879, the *Republican* gave mention to a device which, for several years, consumed nearly as much space in the papers as did the telephone: "George H. Bliss is inventing an im-

provement for use in telephone circuits which prevents the ringing of the call bells except at the station wanted by the central office or other callers." On Sept. 3, 1879, he filed an application for a patent, which was granted Jan. 13, 1880. A company was formed in New Bedford with F. S. Potter as secretary and treasurer, while a well known Eastern Mass. man was expected to take the presidency. Quoting from the *Republican* of Feb. 18, 1880: "Stock in the telephone invention of George H. Bliss, which began at \$1 a share, was sold yesterday for \$55 and stock in the foreign patents is already going quick at \$10 a share."

It will be seen that this invention was something to be reckoned with, in spite of the fact that no such contrivance is employed in these enlightened days. The device was some sort of clock-work attachment and was manufactured by the Terry Clock Co. in Pittsfield. Soon after the Niagara Falls convention, a brief account of its performance there appeared in the *Republican*: "The Bliss telephone signal bell for individual calls worked admirably at the exhibition at Niagara Falls the other day and was conceded to be among the most successful of the different signal attachments exhibited there. The company are already full of orders and it is proposed to soon put the clock-work attachment on the Pittsfield exchange."

It is interesting, in this connection, to read what Thomas Watson in his autobiography has to say about telephonic selective signaling systems:

"Then I turned my attention to what seemed next in importance—an individual call bell. At that time our agents were in the habit of installing many telephone stations on one line, sometimes as many as twenty, each station having a different signal on the call bell. But the constant ringing in all the stations when any one was wanted became a nuisance and some device was needed by which any one station could be called without disturbing the others. I wasted a lot of time devising an instrument for this purpose but, although I succeeded, it was too complicated for practical use. The only solution was to put fewer stations on a line, and as our agents were soon

forced to do this for several reasons, an individual signal was no longer needed."

In spite of this rather discouraging opinion, the call bell device of George H. Bliss seemed to sell like the proverbial "hot cakes"—for a few years at least.

The sports of the year 1880 seemed to favor those of strong lower extremities, according to these two items in the *Republican*: "The 12 hours walking match at Burbank hall Saturday for \$25 and the gate money, Michael Casey, an employee of Liveryman Russell, won the match, making 57 miles in 11½ hours, while Walsh left the track at 53 miles."

"A bicycle club, which 10 Pittsfield men have already joined, is formed and four machines have already been bought, one of which has been put on exhibition at Atwoods."

Late in September, four telephones were placed in Cheshire, being connected to the Pittsfield-North Adams toll line.

The following item from the *Republican* of Oct. 19th is also interesting from a mineralogy standpoint: "Pittsfield will be connected with Richmond by telephone this week and will form part of the local exchange, conversation between the two points being carried on without extra charge. The Cheever ore bed and the Richmond Iron Co.'s office are already connected and the line will be extended to the Leet and Hudson ore beds and from there to West Stockbridge. No more lines will be built this winter."

There were so many infringements on Bell's telephone patent, that the managers were required to be on the lookout for such sources of competition. This *Republican* item of Oct. 11, 1880, in part, deals with such an occurrence: "Manager Cary has found some of the Eaton telephones, against which the Bell Co. have an injunction, in Berkshire county, and will notify those using them to take them out."

About this time, according to a later news item, J. D. Foote was appointed local manager of the Pittsfield exchange.

The telephone was proving popular in Pittsfield, the *Republican* reporting on Nov. 24, 1880: "The Pittsfield telephone exchange, which had 80 stations when the Western Mass. Tel. Co. took hold of it, has now over 160. M. J. Con-

nors who superintended the building of the Central and Southern Berkshire lines, has recently been given charge of repairs for the North Adams exchange.”

At the annual meeting of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. April 13th, these officers were elected: President, George H. Bliss; Clerk, R. H. W. Dwight; Treasurer, C. C. Francis; General Manager, George H. Cary; Directors: George H. Bliss, Wellington Smith, Thomas A. Mole, John T. Power, S. N. Russell, A. B. Whipple, and George H. Cary.

On April 21, 1881, the same paper mentioned plans for extending the benefits of the telephone to more distant localities: “The work of extending the telephone line from Lenox to Lee and Stockbridge is to begin as soon as the frost is out of the ground. The new line will be a part of the Pittsfield exchange.”

Several matters of interest are contained in this April 28th paragraph: “The Western Mass. Tel. Co.’s additional \$10,000 capital, making it \$50,000, has all been taken and old stockholders have the preference until May 3. The directors have voted to put the Bliss Signal in all their exchanges and some changes are made in the price of the rental of telephones, which have been \$36 per year and \$3 additional for the signal. Business places will be charged \$40 a year, an advance of \$4, and residence phones will be reduced to \$34. The 500 clocks necessary are to be made as soon as possible.”

The stock issue having been over-subscribed, and the spring weather having instilled a feeling of optimism, the telephone management had their central office quarters newly carpeted and otherwise improved.

A May 19th item in the *Republican* reported that the separate wire to Cheshire had been started, giving an independent line between Pittsfield and North Adams, and the poles from Pittsfield to the Adams House will have insulators for six wires.

A moving episode was reported in the *Republican* of June 2: “The telephone company will remove their central office to the rooms in the Insurance building over the savings bank. The front rooms adjoining are to be used for the general manager’s and president’s offices which are now over John T.

Power's store on West St." The move took place July 3rd, and the townspeople celebrated the next day with a parade and fireworks—

There now appeared a rather startling announcement in the *Republican* of June 9, 1881:

"Manager Cary has resigned and his resignation will be acted on at today's meeting of directors. For the present there will be a consolidation of some of the duties of the different officers of the corporation and the local managers at Pittsfield, North Adams, Westfield and Northampton will act as managers for their different exchanges. Mr. Cary has been the general manager of the company since its organization." At the next day's meeting the duties of general manager were given to secretary R. H. W. Dwight, who resigned his position with John T. Power.

The *Republican* of May 5, 1882, reported that George Cary had been appointed by the Suburban Telephone Co. of Boston Supt. of district No. 2, which comprises Cambridge, Charlestown, Somerville, and some other outlying towns. On Oct. 18, 1884, the paper reported his returning to his first love—the teaching profession, being appointed sub-master in a Boston Grammar School.

On Nov. 1, 1899, Mr. Cary entered the U. S. Custom Service as a Clerk in the office of the Collector of Customs at Boston, and on Feb. 2, 1902, he was promoted and transferred from the Office of the Appraiser of Customs to the position of Customs Examiner. Mr. Cary died at Belmont, Mass., April 25, 1918, at the age of seventy and was buried at Nantucket. Western Massachusetts owes much to George Cary's vision and venturesome spirit.

In July of 1881, soon after Mr. Cary's resignation, the stock of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. was selling from \$105 to \$107, and the directors declared a 4% dividend.

Lenox was favored with some outside construction in July, which received mention in the *Republican*: "The telephone company are running an additional wire to Lenox making three in all, and double cross arms have had to be put on the poles. A number of summer residents rent telephones only for the season."

On July 11th the poles had been set for the Lee extension and the wires were to be strung two days later: "There will be 20 subscribers at Lee, which is to be a part of the Pittsfield exchange."

In Aug., 1881, the telephone company had all the operators in their exchanges keep account of the calls and connections made for three days. (Now called a 'peg count'.)

There was mention now and then of the damage done to telephones by lightning: "About 20 telephones were burned out in the local exchange by Thursday night's thunder storm."

When the Pittsfield exchange was first started, a generator, furnishing power for ringing, was located in the near-by Pittsfield Coal Gas Co. plant; and when trouble developed the "trouble shooter" had to rush down to the generator room and kick the belt off to avoid getting a shock.

In Sept., 1881, the line to East Lee was completed, and the Telephone Company extended their wire to Curtisville via West Stockbridge, which became a part of the Pittsfield exchange.

There had been talk of opening an exchange in Great Barrington, which would include Egremont, Sheffield, and Ashley Falls; but it was decided to postpone action on this project till spring. In its July 22, 1880, issue, the *Republican* spoke of a private line which had just been finished between Great Barrington and South Egremont.

The annual meeting of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. was held at Pittsfield on April 12, 1882, and, as reported by the *Republican*, "elected these officers: President, George H. Bliss; secretary and treasurer, C. C. Francis; directors, George H. Bliss, John T. Power, Gardner T. Barker, S. N. Russell, A. B. Whipple, of Pittsfield; Wellington Smith of Lee and T. A. Mole of Adams. Wellington Smith declined re-election to the vice-presidency. The company passed its dividend, the construction account having been heavier than was expected the past year, and the capital stock was increased from \$50,000 to \$85,000. R. H. W. Dwight is continued as General Manager."

On April 15, 1882, J. D. Foote, for 18 months local manager of the Pittsfield exchange, resigned; and Charles Raymond was appointed manager in his place.

About this time, Mr. Bliss was quite busily engaged, in his capacity as President of the Telephone Co., conducting negotiations for the sale of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. to the Bay State Tel. Co., but the proceedings which took place in the North Adams and Adams exchanges must be recounted at this point.

#### NORTH ADAMS EXCHANGE

The affairs of the North Adams exchange seemed to progress peacefully during the agitation attendant upon the organization of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. George C. Millard had sold the exchange to George H. Cary on Feb. 16, 1880, and the latter transferred it to the new company April 14th, the date of its incorporation. Mr. Millard agreed to continue as local manager and Mr. Orr decided to remain the manager of the Western Union Telegraph Co. Later he advanced to District Supt. of the Commercial Union Telegraph Co. at North Adams and continued to serve in that capacity after it had been absorbed by the Postal Telegraph Co. Mr. Cary, who was instrumental in forming the Western Mass. Tel. Co., became the General Manager. He now set about expanding the system, and the first object on the agenda was the extension of the lines from North Adams to Adams and Williamstown.

Another project was soon undertaken,—that of building a telephone line between North Adams and Pittsfield, which according to the *Transcript* of May 27th progressed so rapidly that communication between the towns was expected to be established in a few weeks.

The telephone line between North Adams and Williamstown was completed about the first of June, 1880, and the students of Williams College were undoubtedly pleased at the prospect of trying out this new means of communication,—particularly to Northampton and South Hadley.

A news item in the *Transcript* of June 10, 1880, was in connection with the Republican National Convention, where General Garfield received the presidential nomination: "Manager Orr of the Western Union telegraph office is deserving



the thanks of those interested in the Chicago Convention for his promptness in posting bulletins of the balloting and for sending copies to the telephone office that the news might be sent over the town as fast as received."

Considerable information is included in the Adams *Transcript* of July 15, 1880: "The line between North Adams and Pittsfield was completed last Thursday (July 8) and a great amount of business is transacted over the line every day, 25 cents for 3 minutes, the telegraph would be more. A local line has been completed to Adams, where a system of some 20 subscribers is being established with headquarters over Dean's store. In a week or two an independent line is to be run to South Williamstown where there is no telegraph office. The advantages of the telephone system will be shown particularly in the isolated towns like Savoy and Florida which have no telegraphic communication with the rest of the world. The North Adams system has now some 90 subscribers and it is expected that the number will soon reach over 100. The central office is to be remodeled, two new and very large switchboards being among the needed improvements. All through the county magneto bells are being substituted for those first in use and it is intended eventually to have only four stations on a circuit."

About the middle of August, 1880, a branch exchange was opened at Adams with some 20 subscribers, with the headquarters over Dean's store.

The business situation appeared to be improving, if hotel trade was any criterion. The *Transcript* of Nov. 3, 1880, described a new hostelry under construction: "The new hotel being built on State St. by Owen Welch will probably be called the "American House". It is to be four stories high, and will contain 60 rooms. The office will be in the middle of the lower floor, leaving one store one either side. The dining-room will be on the second floor."

About the time of the completion of this hotel, which became famous for its cuisine and hospitality à la American plan, the following sample of Vermont humor was, no doubt, recounted here by some traveling salesman:

A Middlebury man milked his cow, set the pail in front of

the animal, took up the milking stool and carefully placed it on the pantry shelf. The cow drank up the milk and at last accounts no cream had risen on the milking stool.

Prof. George M. Mowbray, after the completion of the Hoosac Tunnel, remained in North Adams and started a factory of his own for the manufacture of nitro glycerine. It was Nov. 11, 1880, when this ingenious individual was again mentioned in the *Transcript*: "Prof. Mowbray started up on Tuesday his works for manufacturing his new insulated wire. He began on the order from the state for wire to be used in the Hoosac Tunnel. There is every indication of complete success in this new invention."

A person not familiar with textile terms might be rather startled upon reading the following: "The Williamstown Mfg. Co. are running their mules till nine o'clock in the evening to keep up with their looms."

Information was provided by the *Transcript* of Nov. 18, 1880, regarding several subjects of moment: "The telephone line was completed to South Williamstown Nov. 6, with a single station, that at Greylock Institute, the flourishing and excellent boarding school of the Millses. The Williamstown circuit at present has three stations: at the Williamstown Mfg. Co.'s mill office, at the coal office of T. W. Richmond & Co., and at the livery office of Thomas McMahan, which is at present a public station. The North Adams office has just received 20 magneto bells, with boards of new design supporting battery and bell, with connecting wires let into the back, for the first time furnished by the company. These have been put in place of the battery bell first used, so that 9 only of these now remain on the circuit. It is thought that carpenters and others have at times, to facilitate their work, interfered with the attachment of telephone wires to buildings, in ignorance of the fact that the law imposes a fine of \$500 or imprisonment for two years for such offence."

A personal note, which were not too frequent, appeared in the Nov. 24, 1880, *Republican*: "M. J. Connors, who superintended the building of the Central and Southern Berkshire lines, has recently been given charge of the repairs for the North Adams exchange."

The next day the *Transcript* published another personal note, which disclosed that Manager Millard had been pursuing a phase of electrical work which was referred to in those days as "sparking." "Mr. George C. Millard, Manager of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. for Western Berkshire, and Miss Jennie Campbell of Williamstown, were married at the groom's residence on Center St., Wednesday evening week. Numerous and valuable presents were left with the happy couple, and a very pleasant wedding banquet is reported. Mr. and Mrs. Millard will reside at the groom's new house on Center St."

Christmas not being far away, the spirit of the season seemed to take hold of the telephone officials, judging from this item in the *Transcript*: "The telephone central office is to be painted and papered, and the annunciators are to be lowered and placed in stands so that the operators can sit, instead of being obliged to stand as now. The floor is to be carpeted, and a railing put up between the operators and the space for the public."

Quite a sizeable increase to the list of subscribers occurred, which were listed in the *Transcript* of Jan. 13, 1881: "The following new connections have been made to the telephone exchange not included in the published list: Adams—L. L. Brown Paper Co., B. F. Phillips' residence, Colony and Bowen, Ainsley and Isabel, Smith, Mole & Co., Allen Iron Works, A. B. Mole's residence. South Williamstown—Greylock Institute. Cheshire—Burgett office and residence, Bowen's store and Post Office, Darby's drug store, Dean and Martin, Dr. Thayer's office and residence. North Adams—P. J. Boland's store, Billings Brothers' store, Boston, Hoosac Tunnel and Western abstract office, Brigham's store, Chace & Co.'s meat market, M. J. Holbrook's shop, Parkhurst and Alford law office, A. H. Jones' residence, Richardson and Flagg's Coal office, Troy and Boston Railroad general office."

During December a few events transpired to show that the Tunnel City was still making progress. F. E. Swift, who conducted the Wilson House for some years and made it a noted resort for travelers and guests, bought the entire Wilson House block. It was decided to double track the Hoosac tunnel as soon as possible and to illuminate it, providing the engine

ordered for the experiment with electric lighting proved satisfactory.

The prospect of furnishing the state with nitro glycerine for this extensive work was, no doubt, pleasing to Prof. Mowbray. A further reference to his cable project appeared in the Dec. 16, 1880, *Transcript*: "It has been decided to put 4 or more wires in the cable which Prof. Mowbray is making to lay in the tunnel, and one of them will be for the Western Union. Prof. Mowbray's new invention in insulated wire is said to do away with induction so that the wires may be placed nearly side by side."

A new and complete telephone directory of the subscribers on the "Western Mass. line" was printed by C. M. Ward of the Springfield Printing Co., and delivered early in May, in which there were 125 names in North Adams and Williamstown, and 35 in Adams.

Further telephone progress was recorded in the *Transcript* of June 16, 1881. "The local telephone exchange has commenced the use of the electric clock, by which all unnecessary disturbance from the ringing of bells is avoided. About 60 of these clocks are now in use here. (The Bliss telephone signal clocks made in Pittsfield.) The exchange here is in a very good condition now, and is well conducted, about an average of 600 calls a day being answered. The Wilson House drug store, H. A. Smith & Son, Chief Engineer Hubbell, A. B. Wright & Co., John Bracewell and the town farm have been connected recently. George M. Dyke succeeds Joseph Wood as night operator."

A demand for telephone service had arisen in several communities in Southern Vermont. Readsboro was about 17 miles from North Adams, by a north east road through Stamford and Hartwellville, thence south east to Readsboro, thus passing around the northern end of Hoosac Range. Jacksonville was about 8 miles east of Readsboro, and Wilmington 7 miles north of Jacksonville.

The idea of anyone so far away from North Adams expecting telephone service seemed rather fanciful, but here it was, reported in the *Republican* of April 8, 1881: "A line is to be

built by private parties from North Adams to Readsboro, Vt., and from there to Wilmington.”

The *Transcript* on Oct. 6th reported that the private parties were now contemplating a stock company with a capital of \$1,200. The plan was to connect this line to the switchboard of the North Adams exchange and pay the Western Mass. Co. a suitable sum for operating their stations.

The final arrangement was described in the *Transcript* of Nov. 3, 1881: “The telephone from Jacksonville to this town (North Adams) is assured, and is to be known as the Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co. with a capital stock of \$1,500. It is expected it will be in running order within three weeks. The organization was completed at Readsboro last week, with the following officers: President, James Bullock, Readsboro; Vice-president, George S. Goodnough, Sadawga; Secretary, W. P. Jones, Jacksonville; Treasurer, Abed Hall, Stamford; Auditors N. L. Stetson, Jacksonville; A. H. Tucker, Appolis Bailey, Readsboro; directors, E. J. Bullock, Readsboro; R. H. W. Dwight, Pittsfield; H. C. Millington, Sadawga; R. Q. Wilcox, Jacksonville; C. E. Winchell, Stamford; M. Davidson, Hartwellville; John T. Carrier, Readsboro Falls; Committee on by-laws, H. N. Hix, Sadawga; A. A. Butterfield, Jacksonville; A. H. Tucker, Readsboro. The meeting adjourned to meet at Readsboro at 10 o'clock this morning.”

It does not appear that many of the prospective customers of this company were slighted in the selection of officers and directors, 14 parties being thus honored, all of whom resided along the route to Jacksonville, except Mr. Dwight.

It seems rather incredible that on Thursday Dec. 8th the *Transcript* reported this swift progress: “The telephone line of the Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co. will be in running order this week, and the rates for messages to subscribers of the Western Mass. Co. have been established. They are: to Stamford, 15 cents; to Hartwellville, Readsboro Falls, and Readsboro, 20 cents; to Sadawga and Jacksonville 25 cents. The operators at the different stations are Jacksonville, Stetson and Jones; Sadawga, Millington and Goodnow; Readsboro, James Bullock & Son; Readsboro Falls, J. T. Carrier; Hartwellville, M. Davidson; North Stamford, Fred Para-

dise; Stamford, C. E. Winchell." The "operators at the different stations" were presumably business proprietors, whose telephones were available to the public, and who had people summoned to the phone—in consideration of a small fee.

In viewing the way telephone lines sprang into existence, it must be remembered that only one iron wire, grounded at the ends, was the practice; and that trees, in most instances, served as telephone poles. The magneto call bells were in series, and their coils of wire impeded the electric speaking current, so that it seems quite miraculous that the subscribers could hear anything at all.

In the meantime, the Brattleboro Telephone exchange had erected a line through Marlboro and Wilmington and thence to Jacksonville, so that it was not surprising to read the following in the Dec. 20th *Republican*: "Conversation between North Adams and Brattleboro, Vt., via Jacksonville, was distinctly carried on Saturday, and Pittsfield was also connected, making 70 miles."

A financial item, pleasing to the stockholders of the new company, was given in the *Transcript* March 2, 1882: "The Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co's receipts last month were \$80 and the capital stock is worth but \$1,500, so that the dividends will probably be large." On August 15th, the directors of this company met at the Paradise Hotel, Stamford, and declared a dividend of \$1 a share from the first six months' business, which was about 15% a year.

The new line of the North River Telephone Co. from Jacksonville, Vt., to Shelburne Falls, was now in operation. The directors of the Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co., at their meeting Aug. 15th, voted to connect with this North River Co., which gave Berkshire County communication with Shelburne Falls and towns north of it.

An important step was now taken by the Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co. which was disclosed by the *Transcript* of Aug. 31, 1882: "A new switchboard has been placed at Jacksonville by the Telephone Co. Hereafter no messages will be sent from our North Adams central office. They will be sent from Morse and Orrs book store." The company now had a switchboard of their own.

The following news item is of special interest to many telephone people, who have had the privilege of knowing the gentleman referred to because of the many years he served as Manager of the North Adams exchange. This article appeared in the Sept. 9, 1882, *Republican*: "A change in the local management of the telephone exchange is talked of, and W. H. Stedman, for some time with Prof. Mowbray and an excellent electrician, is recommended by a number of the business men for the place."

Several references to Mr. Stedman's activities have appeared in the papers prior to this, which afford glimpses of his earlier life. As far back as 1872 the business directory showed him conducting a crockery, jewelry and silverware store with D. A. Atkins, and a little later he became sole owner, specializing in watches and jewelry. Then the *Transcript* of Feb. 20, 1879, told of an expansion: "Stedman, the jeweler, has very convenient arrangements in his new store in Fisher's block for the prosecution of his silver and gold plating business. He has several rooms devoted especially to the work of plating and has added new and important apparatus. His new Amber Polish is meeting with a remarkable sale in this vicinity, and a well known cutlery company has ordered 2,880 bottles, 20 gross."

Williams College, at Williamstown, was the Alma Mater of General Garfield, and the following article in the *Transcript* of Feb. 17, 1881, must have created quite a pleasurable flurry in this small college town: "The inauguration of a new president of Williams College and the presence of General Garfield, who will return to the Silver Anniversary of his class as President of the United States, must make an interesting commencement week at Williamstown."

The inauguration of President Elect Carter was to take place July 6th, and President Garfield had consented to speak for the college trustees. Unfortunately, however, the joy of welcoming the President of the United States to this happy ceremony was not to be realized. The *Transcript* of July 7, 1881, thus conveyed the sad news: "The country was startled on Saturday (July 2) by the news that President Garfield had been fatally shot in the railroad depot at Washington, as he, accompanied by Secretary Blane, was entering the depot of the

Baltimore and Potomac railroad to take the train for New York. The presidential party was to leave Washington for an extended journey through New England. On Monday morning they were to go to Williamstown to attend the commencement exercises of Williams College, then on Thursday noon to St. Albans, Vt. and to White Mountains."

The Western Mass. Tel. Co. was acquired by the Bay State Telephone Co. Sept. 13, 1882, and an account of what transpired in the North Adams exchange under the jurisdiction of this larger company will be found in Chapter 12.

#### ADAMS EXCHANGE

Soon after the opening of the North Adams Exchange, the thought of providing Adams with similar benefits seemed to be uppermost in people's minds. The form of service talked of was that of a branch exchange, which would be a switchboard connected to the one at North Adams, and which would permit a free interchange of calls.

The first definite information to this effect appeared in the *Transcript* of Sept. 4, 1879: "The telephone line will probably be extended to Adams, as a branch system is being organized there. The advantages of becoming a subscriber to the North Adams Telephone Co., of which the system in Adams will be a part, are increasing constantly."

A later report was given by the *Transcript* of Dec. 18th: "The business men are anxious to have the telephone system introduced, especially if it can be connected with the central office at North Adams. A canvass was recently made and 17 subscribers obtained, and it is thought that as soon as the system can be put in successful operation that nearly as many more can be obtained. There are 2 or 3 private lines about town."

Undoubtedly, the results of the canvass were not such as to cause any precipitate action, as generally 50 applicants were considered necessary to warrant the opening of an exchange.

However, time was passing and the business men were waiting rather impatiently for the extension of the telephone system to Adams. The number of subscribers, who were ready as soon as the wires were put up, had increased to 20.



The organization of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. at Pittsfield on April 15, 1880, brought the part of Mass. west of the Conn. river under its jurisdiction, and the next day this encouraging news was printed in the *Transcript*: "The work of extending the system will begin at once. The first thing on the programme is the extension of the line from North Adams to Adams and Williamstown." Then on May 13th it was announced that General Manager Cary was to put a large force on work in Adams in a few weeks.

The sight of this large force of men at work in their streets must have occasioned this June 3rd article: "The business men are pleased that the telephone system is to be introduced, and a score or more are ready to put in the 'machines'. It has been decided to put the central office in the telegraph room at the depot. Telegraph Operator Faure, by the way, intends to go back to France next fall to introduce the telephone." Those who thought that the people in France talked mostly with their hands were of the opinion that this mission was a case of "Love's Labour's Lost," but others adhered to the sentiment expressed in that stirring ballad, "Hands Across the Sea."

The *Transcript*, the middle of July, was able to report something more tangible. "A local line has been completed to Adams, where a system of some 20 subscribers is being established with headquarters over Dean's store.

On August 5th Messers Robinson & Son, publishers of the *Transcript*, again reviewed the situation: "The telephone exchange is not yet in working order, but is being put into condition as rapidly as circumstances will allow. The new style key-board has been put in the central office and the lines are now nearly all up. There has been considerable vexatious delays owing to the company's inability to secure magneto bells."

The next reference was Aug. 26th, when it recorded the fact that the telephone company had lately put in 15 stations, among which were the mill offices of H. S. Millard and Adams Bros. and the store of Anthony & Burlingame.

It would appear from the above that the central office was

opened sometime between Aug. 5th and the 26th, 1880, it being conjectured that the date was about August 21st.

It is not surprising that some curtailment in expenses was deemed advisable by the management. On Nov. 11, 1880, it was reported that the telephone office has been moved to the telegraph office at the depot as a matter of convenience and economy. However, the new year brought better times: "The following new connections have been made to the telephone exchange not included in the published list: L. L. Brown Paper Co., B. F. Phillip's residence, Colony and Bowen, Ainsley and Isabel, Smith, Mole & Co., Allen Iron Works, A. B. Mole's residence."

Officials of the cheese producing town smelt a rat, to the chagrin of some telephone linemen, of which the *Republican* got wind. "A number of telephone poles which were placed too far out in the highway at Cheshire have been ordered back by the authorities."

Business between Pittsfield, Adams and North Adams had increased to the point where more circuits were needed, and the *Republican* mentions that the poles from Pittsfield to the Adams House will have insulators for six wires.

In the meantime, the telephone outlook in Adams had brightened considerably, which was related in the *Transcript* of Dec. 8, 1881: "The Telephone Company have now 50 subscribers here. The telephone exchange has been removed from the telegraph office to rooms on the third floor of the Bank block on Main St., with Charles L. Flint of Northampton in charge, and the work of the exchange can now probably be attended to with satisfaction to its subscribers."

May 3, 1882, the *Republican* announced: "The new Westfield Telephone Manager is to be Charles L. Flint of the Adams exchange, and he will assume control today. Edmund G. Flint, who has been night operator at the Westfield exchange, is promoted to the management of the Adams office."

Adams was a town of 5,593 at the beginning of 1880, having been reduced in numbers by the incorporation of North Adams as a separate township in April, 1878. Adams was favored by important textile and paper mills, so that its

financial stability did not appear threatened as a result of this separation.

A description of the industrial situation in Adams was given in the *Transcript* of Aug. 14, 1879: "Adams was never so busy before. The Blackington Woolen Mill at Maple Grove, recently leased by the North Adams Woolen Co., is the last to start up. The Renfrew Mfg. Co. are just completing their second one-story weave shop and their establishment may now be truly called an immense one. The settlement that has grown up around the mills, and dependent upon them for support, is large enough, almost, to be a town by itself, and there are yet a good many more tenement houses to be built. The success of the Renfrew Co. is something remarkable, and the people of Adams are justly proud of two such enterprising, successful and widely known manufacturing corporations as the Renfrew Gingham and L. L. Brown Paper Cos. There is a great scarcity of tenements in town, and the business men generally are of the opinion that it would be a profitable investment for somebody who has the money and enterprise to put up a block with tenements that could be rented for about \$150 or \$200 a year." (\$12.50 or \$16.66 per month.)

Cheshire, which adjoins Adams on the south, was plying its art of cheese making in those days, which was described in the *Transcript* of Feb. 24, 1881: "The Greylock Cheese Co. made last year 103,928 lbs. of cheese and paid the farmers \$10.20 a hundred. It took about 10½ lbs. of milk for one cheese and the cost of making was \$1.40 a hundred. The company paid a dividend of 9 per cent and the old officers have been re-elected."

Adams had its inventors, too; Charles E. Allen being mentioned as having invented and patented an individual call box for telephone lines, which prevented the bells on a line being rung except the one wanted.

The esteemed editors of the *Transcript* appeared to question the wisdom of some of Adams' financial schemes: "A horse-railway, an electric light company, and other improbable prospects are being agitated. There may be something in the electric light story, as it would not be very expensive; but when a horse-railway of three miles costs \$60,000, as it did in

Northampton, the chances for its construction are small, notwithstanding the benefit such a road would be running from Adams to Briggsville.”

Besides the theatrical performances available in North Adams, Adams also had the benefit of the Father Mathew Dramatic Association.

The Bay State Telephone Co. acquired the Western Mass. Tel. Co. on Sept. 13, 1882, and further information regarding the Adams exchange under this new company is contained in Chapter 12.

## CHAPTER 6

### *Western Massachusetts Telephone Company Northampton - Westfield - Greenfield Exchanges*

#### NORTHAMPTON EXCHANGE

NORTHAMPTON was the first community in Western Massachusetts to be visited by Alexander Graham Bell. This occurred before his invention of the telephone, and while he was introducing his father's system of "visible speech" to the United States.

The Clarke Institute of Northampton, having been chartered by the state, was incorporated July 15, 1867. The leader in this movement was Gardiner G. Hubbard, whose sympathy for the deaf and dumb was aroused by the plight of his young daughter, Mabel. Mr. Hubbard later played a prominent part in the development of the telephone, and his daughter Mabel became the young inventor's wife.

An account of A. G. Bell's visit to the Clarke Institute was given in the school's fifth annual report, year ending Sept. 1, 1872: "Mr. Bell spent the months of March and April in our school devoting four hours each week day to instruction. One hour was given to our teachers collectively, another hour was devoted to the peculiarities of individual pupils, and to developing the possibilities of his system with respect to them. The remaining two hours were spent in the several class rooms, in superintending the application of his system by the different teachers, making suggestions and rendering personal as-

sistance." A later reference in the same report stated: "Its use so far has been exceedingly encouraging and promises well for the future." Dr. Bell became a trustee of the Clarke School in 1898 and was elected president of the Corporation in 1917, both of which positions he held until his death, Aug. 21, 1922.

Northampton's first experience in telephony was reported by the *Republican* of Aug. 26, 1879: "As far as known there are no Edison or Bell telephones in Northampton. Dr. Highbee constructed one or two for his own use very early in the history of the invention and his method of making them has been copied by some of his friends. There are some others in use that are constructed in the simplest way but which work well for short distances." This latter kind may have been what was known as the "lovers' telegraph," which consisted of a little tin box connected by a string to another tin box. It was said that its name induced many to purchase them.

The first reference to private lines was given in the Feb. 28, 1880, *Republican*: "A telephonic transmitter is to be placed in the Congregational Church of Enfield to day and connected with the houses of several who are unable to attend the service."

The *Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Courier*, better known as the *Hampshire Gazette*, or *Gazette*, on March 2nd gave this news: "Mr. George H. Cary of Pittsfield was in town last week representing the interests of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. Its interests in Northampton are represented by Lewis Warner and Frank Edwards who will give information and take subscriptions for stock." Mr. Warner was cashier in the Hampshire County National Bank and Treasurer of the Hampshire Savings Bank.

Mr. Cary's visit evidently produced results, for the *Republican* reported on March 13th: "Some 15 prominent business men met at the Hampshire County bank yesterday to talk up having the telephone introduced. Mr. Tobey, of Pittsfield, was present to explain matters and subscription papers were left. Something more tangible will be done in a few days."

It will be noted that considerable emphasis was placed on obtaining subscriptions for the stock of the new company. Finally, enough investors in Western Mass. signed on the

dotted line to warrant proceeding with its organization, and the Western Mass. Tel. Co. was incorporated April 14, 1880, with headquarters at Pittsfield.

The first step in establishing an exchange in Northampton was soon taken, according to the *Republican* of June 1st: "The canvassers at work getting subscribers for the new telephone company have thus far met with good success. Wires will be run to Florence and Leeds, and a good patronage is anticipated from the outside districts, Easthampton, Haydenville and Williamsburg. The exchange will open with 100 subscribers. The Central Office will be located on the third floor of the Parsons block, 92 Main Street." Later it was disclosed that James H. Cary, brother of George H. Cary, the General Manager of the Company, was named local manager. The Parsons Block, recently destroyed by fire, has been part of the F. W. Woolworth property for some time.

On August 6th, the *Republican* related, "the telephone poles are being set up at the rate of three quarters of a mile a day, so that it will be in running order by September 1st. Probably Northampton will, for the present, talk with Springfield by way of Westfield."

By September 10th, 13 telephone wires had been strung across Main Street from the central office, and on October 15th the *Republican* provided this news: "Work on the telephone lines progresses very slowly, some 25 subscribers being now connected with the central office. The wires are up as far as Smith's Ferry and connection will probably be made with Holyoke next week. Poles have been distributed from Mt. Tom station to Williston Mills, Easthampton, thereby putting Easthampton in connection with the main lines to Springfield."

It would appear from the above article that the Northampton exchange was opened in October, 1880. This is confirmed by the same paper on October 25th: "The Northampton company have already put up some 40 miles of wire and will get up 20 more before winter sets in. Forty phones are now connected with the central office, and 60 more connections will be made as soon as the instruments arrive."

The practicability of the telephone was immediately dem-

onstrated. Quoting the *Gazette* of November 9th: "The telephone proved very useful election evening at the town hall. An instrument was placed in the hall at the rear of the stage, and being directly connected with the Connecticut River R. R. station, returns reached the hall from the telegraph office much sooner and with less trouble than would have been possible otherwise."

Installments of telephones arrived now and then, so that by November 30th, 76 subscribers had been connected. A misunderstanding with the Bell Telephone Co. caused a delay in getting the line through to Holyoke, so that this important event did not occur until about December 10th.

The *Hampshire Gazette* kindly acquainted the public with the telephone rates: "Each subscriber is charged \$3 per month. Non subscribers can make use of the telephone for local communications at the store of the Parsons and Wells Co. at the center or the store of W. H. Riley at Florence, ten cents being charged for the privilege. The rates to Holyoke, Westfield and Springfield are 15 cents to local subscribers and to non subscribers 25 cents for five minutes."

The latter part of November, 1880, poles were put up from Florence to Bay State, and connection with Easthampton was expected the middle of December.

A *Gazette* reporter turned out this lively bit of information for the December 14th issue: "Last week communication was opened with Springfield, Worcester and Westfield and the manager gave a few friends a "free ride," so to speak, over the wires. Doctors sit in their wide-arm chairs and prescribe for patients over the phone, suburban factories do business in town without coming in, bank officers save their clerks many steps, and even lawyers talk civilly at the end of telephone wires."

On Feb. 1, 1881, the *Hampshire Gazette* published a list of the subscribers connected to the Northampton exchange. This list shows 66 names under Northampton, 11 in Florence, 4 in Leeds, 6 in Williamsburg, 6 in Haydenville, 8 in Easthampton and 3 in Bay State—a total of 104. This list was taken from the telephone directory and it will be noted that no telephone numbers are shown, and the names are not in alpha-



betical order. One, making a call in those days, asked for the desired party by name.

*Northampton*

February 1, 1881

Fire Engine House	Parsons & Wells*
Gazette Printing Co.'s Office	Dr. Dunlap
L. S. Davis, house	Williams Mfg. Co.
N. H. & N. Freight Depot	John Metcalf, house
M. L. & M. W. Graves	Dr. Seymour, house
J. A. Sullivan	Dr. Parkhurst, house
French & Kimball	Dr. Knowlton, house
E. N. Foote & Co.	Lewis Warner, house
Dr. A. W. Thompson, house	Conn. R. R. Freight depot
Henry R. Hinckley, house	Conn. R. R. Passenger depot
Clarke Institution	Western Union Tel. Company
L. Bodman, house	Clark's Stable
George D. Jewett	Hampshire House
F. H. Stoddard	Maynard & Brooks
Northampton National Bank	Eames & Sprague
Clapp & Johnson	American Express Co.
Daniel's Stable	N. B. Hussey & Co.
E. C. Barr	Dewey & Loomis
W. F. Prindle	John Parnell
Carr's Bakery	Thomas Raftry
Woods Stable	E. P. Copeland
T. Shea's Market	Washburn & Banks
Mansion House	Jackson's Market
Boston Branch	P. H. Dewey
C. H. Pierce	George S. Whitbeck
Journal Office	O. Edwards & Co.
H. L. James, house	Bond Bros. & Bottum
George D. Sherwin, house	Dr. R. W. Higbee
Dr. Davenport	Hampshire Co. Bank
Oliver Walker	E. N. Foote, house
First National Bank	Holley's Stable
Metcalf & Company	Nonotuck House
Delano & Hammond	E. H. Brainard, Florist

*Florence*

Arthur G. Hill, house	Dr. Gaylord, office
Greenville Mfg. Co.	Col. J. L. Otis, house
Jackson's Slaughter House	Florence Hotel
J. H. Cary, house	Nonotuck Silk Co.
Florence Machine Co.	Luther J. Warner
O. L. Woodward*	

*Leeds*

E. S. Ross*	Emery Wheel Co.
Mill River Button Co.	Nonotuck Silk Co.

*Williamsburg*

H. G. Hill, Mill	H. L. James, Mill
L. D. James*	Williamsburg Depot
Orcutt House	Woodward & Lyman

*Haydenville*

Smith & Fay	P. Larkin
B. Loomis Hotel	L. D. James
Haydenville Depot	Hayden Co.

*Easthampton*

Williston Mills	W. F. Alvord
Telegraph Office	Mt. Tom Thread Co.
C. J. Smith*	Nashawannuck Mills
First National Bank	Valley Machine Co.

*Bay State*

E. J. Towne	W. T. Clement Cutlery Co.
Northampton Cutlery Co.	

\* = *For Public Use*

March 14th, the Republican reported 120 subscribers on the list, and two weeks later announced that 11 Bliss individual

call clocks were being tried out on one line. In April, an enlarged and improved switch-board with a capacity of 50 wires was installed. The Bliss individual call clocks cut out the bells on a line, except the one wanted.

Another testimonial to the efficacy of Alexander Graham Bell's invention is given in the *Hampshire Gazette*: "Haydenville. How handy that telephone is. A general office is accessible at the post office, and also at L. D. James' store. Last week Wesley Pierce received a telephone dispatch through Smith and Fay, that he was wanted at Ludlow. Going down he struck a soft job overseeing of the laying of 1,500,000 bricks. The Ludlow Company to put up four large brick shops of about 400 feet each in length. He receives \$3 a day and house rent."

Following the resignation of General Manager George H. Cary, R. H. W. Dwight had been appointed to take his place. The *Republican* of July 11th, 1881, told of other changes. "Manager Dwight of Pittsfield was in town Saturday transferring the management of the Northampton office from James H. Cary, who resigns, to George D. Sherwin. Mr. Sherwin built up the Westfield exchange and put up most of the local wires." It was reported on September 29th that James H. Cary, late manager of the Northampton telephone exchange, has taken a position with the Boston Electric Co., at the Worcester branch office. The next year he organized "The Cary Telephone Signal Co.," capital \$35,000, at Boston, to make his individual call device. George D. Sherwin first worked as a lineman in Springfield for the District Telephone and Automatic Signal Co. in 1879.

The advance in the business rates from \$36 to \$40 a year on July 1, 1881, provoked an incident, which was later described quite dramatically in the *Northampton Graphic*: "Sixty-five years ago a Northampton man was informed that his telephone bill was to be increased to \$40 a year. In a fit of anger, he ran to the instrument and hacked the wires with a knife. In doing this he unwittingly cut off all communication on his circuit."

The slashing and the grumbling having ceased, the company scraped together enough funds to purchase a new switchboard. Its installation was described in the *Republican* of Aug. 10,

1881: "Mr. Cross, operator at the Central telephone office, and his lineman worked all Monday night getting their new switchboard with the Snell jacks in working order and were already for business at 6 o'clock yesterday morning. The new board works perfectly, the old trouble about the wires not being sufficiently grounded having been done away with. There is room for 50 circuits in the new board and the exchange has over 30." This board was invented by A. G. Snell of New Haven and George F. Perkins, the Holyoke telephone manager, and is described in Chapter 2.

Manager Sherwin now began casting his eyes about for new lands to conquer. This item appeared under the *Republican's* Amherst column of Aug. 30, 1881: "Manager Sherwin was in town Saturday looking over the ground with a view to extending the circuit to Amherst, and some 15 parties pledged themselves to have telephones put in their houses or offices. Mr. Sherwin will report at headquarters, and, if there is sufficient encouragement, the line is likely to be built."

A week later it was reported that Manager Sherwin was canvassing Amherst for the purpose of opening a telephone service in that town in connection with the Northampton exchange, and that 20 subscribers had been obtained.

The Northampton exchange on Sept. 21, 1881, put up its 27th line, which connected residences on Elm and Green Streets. At the beginning of 1882, the exchange had 130 subscribers, and about 30 connections were being made to Springfield daily. In March, the necessary number of subscribers had been secured in Hatfield, and it was planned to connect that thriving town as soon as the frost was out of the ground. In May there were 14 subscribers on the Easthampton "branch."

The last Northampton item to be reported during the life of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. was from the Aug. 21, 1882, *Republican*, and, fortunately, it provides a happy ending:

"Operator Cross, of the telephone exchange, is off for a two weeks trip in New York state."

Northampton, the county seat of Hampshire County, had a population of 12,172 in 1880. It did not adopt the city form

of government until June 23, 1883, Benjamin E. Cook, Jr., a democrat, being elected the first mayor.

The town and suburbs possessed quite a few industries at that time, the silk industry being most prominent. The Belding Bros., which became the largest silk manufacturers in the world, had a mill here. The Nonotuck Silk Co. contributed greatly towards building up the village of Florence, and there were the silk works of L. J. Warner and the Leonards.

The Williams Manufacturing Co. conducted a large basket business. Other concerns were: the Florence Tack Co., Emery Wheel Co., Leeds; Florence Machine Co.; Lee Cutlery Shop, Bay State; Mill River Button Co., Leeds; Williston Mills, Easthampton; Mt. Tom Thread Co.; Northampton Cutlery Co. and W. T. Clement Cutlery Co.

The New Haven & Northampton R.R. ran as far as Williamsburg, and was called the "Canal Railroad." There used to be a canal running from Northampton to New Haven, traces of which can be seen at Avon and Farmington. This railroad is now a part of the New York, New Haven & Hartford system and is operated as a freight line. The Connecticut River Railroad of those days is now owned by the Boston & Maine R.R.

A reference to local transportation was given in the November 10th paper: "The horse-railroad company are having a car built to run on runners this winter, in place of the well-known vehicle used in winter popularly known as 'Noah's Ark.'" The idea of the runners probably developed from winter experiences like the following: "The horse-railroad company have dug for their tracks again, and will start out with the cars today."

Northampton was also noted as a seat of learning. Smith College was dedicated July 14, 1875. There were several private schools for girls and an admirable public school system. On Nov. 2, 1880, the *Republican* gave the Smith College enrollment: "The new Smith College catalogue shows 227 students in the collegiate department of whom 30 are seniors, 50 are juniors, 72 are sophomores and 75 of the entering class. Also 25 in the school of music and 2 in the school of art making the whole number in the college 254." Forbes Library

was built in 1890 and has been a great adjunct to these schools of learning.

Round Hill played an important role in the social and cultural life of the town. Its slightly crest, commanding a superb view of the fields, river and mountains, induced some of Northampton's distinguished residents to build homes there. Jenny Lind "the Swedish Nightingale" gave a concert in Northampton in July, 1851. She was so impressed by the charm of Round Hill that the next year, after her marriage to her Concert Manager, Otto Goldschmidt, they spent their three months' honeymoon at the Round Hill Hotel.

A continuation of Northampton's telephone activities will be found in Chapter 11.

#### WESTFIELD EXCHANGE

The introduction of the electric speaking telephone to Westfield occurred on May 12, 1877, in connection with the three point program given by Alexander Graham Bell. An account of what happened in Westfield that evening is given in the weekly copy of the *Western Hampden Times* and *Westfield News-Letter*:

#### *The Telephone*

Springfield and Pittsfield made a bridge of Westfield's nose on Saturday evening, as a means of investigating and enjoying the new mode of audible communication which reduces magnificent distances to a conversational capacity. The telephone annihilates space and brings people at a distance, ear to ear. T. A. Watson was master of ceremonies here, Prof. Bell at Springfield and "Mr. Gower" at Pittsfield. G. H. Southland, of Springfield, played two cornet solos for the benefit of the Springfield and Pittsfield audiences. H. B. Stevens sang "The Morning Light is Breaking" and "Hold The Fort," both of which were distinctly heard in all parts of the hall at Springfield and Pittsfield. The office of the Western Union Telegraph Co. was filled by about thirty of our best citizens to witness the entertainment. All that they were permitted to hear was a cornet solo played in Springfield, the sound of which was barely audible. The repeated calls of the operator

for "Mr. Gower"! "Mr. Gower"! was a treat to the ears of the guests. Mr. Dawes of Pittsfield, called for Mr. Gillett, but Mr. Gillett being indisposed was not present. After Messrs. Titsworth and Hopkins had retired, they were both called for from Springfield.

Over two years elapsed before any further news regarding the telephone in Westfield appeared in the papers. On July 7, 1879, the *Westfield Times and News-Letter* announced that "Westfield is about to enjoy the advantages of the telephone. Not only will our business men be able to intercommunicate with it but connections will be made with Springfield." And on August 6th the same paper continued: "The Telephone Company will proceed to construct their lines as soon as preliminaries are settled and it will probably be in operation in less than a month."

The *Springfield Daily Republican* on August 19, 1879, presented a more cynical view: "The telephone project, which started off with such vim two or three weeks ago, has been little heard of for some time. The trouble seems to be that the canvassing agent is willing to let whichever of the rival companies (Springfield Telephone Company, and the District Telephone and Automatic Signal Company) pays the most for it have the list, and the number of subscribers is not large enough to be much of a temptation to either. Undoubtedly, were the wires up and in use, the 40 subscribers could soon be doubled in number."

Nothing ever came of this first telephone venture, and the townspeople settled back into their usual ways of living. There was quite a business depression at this time, and the *Times and News-Letter* tried to keep their readers cheered up: "The exodus of Westfieldians to pleasure resorts will be much smaller this year than usual owing to the unfavorable report of the committee on 'Ways and Means.' The prospects for business are brightening. The iron and woolen interests throughout the country are starting up under a freshening breeze. Hold up courage a little longer and the ship of business will be safely moored in the haven of prosperity."

The Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. was formed April 14, 1880, with headquarters at Pittsfield, and the ter-

ritory granted it by the Bell Telephone Co. included Westfield. The enterprising George H. Cary, who was instrumental in organizing the company, and who was General Manager, lost no time in dispatching a representative to Westfield to canvass for subscribers. This took place in May and June, 1880.

The canvass appeared to turn out well, and the next step was described in the *Republican* of July 15th: "The telephone company have begun work by fitting up their quarters at No. 7, Post Office Building, and putting a tower on the roof into which their wires will enter. The office will always be open, as an operator will remain there all night." This is a two story building, situated on Elm Street, between School Street and the First National Bank.

The outside plant work was summed up by the same paper on August 9th: "The Western Mass. Tel. Co. have had men at work a week or two putting up wires, and, in a few days, the instruments will be put into the stores and offices. There are 25 circuits, arranged for five subscribers on each, but as yet only 74 have been secured. In the center of the town, five miles of wire have been stretched and with the line to Little River, Crane Brothers' paper mill and Springfield, 18 miles of wire will be used. The charge made to subscribers is \$25 a year or \$36 if a Blake transmitter is added. Probably a majority will have the transmitter. Joseph Jepson who superintended the work of putting up the wires will have charge of the central telephone office. Non-subscribers are allowed the use of the telephone at the rate of 10 cents for three minutes. Poles are erected half-way to West Springfield, and there the wire will be connected with that of the Springfield Company."

The proprietors of the *Times and News-Letter* had learned to discount the optimistic predictions of the telephone managers, as evidenced by this model of discretion: "The telephone will be done when it is completed. Anything more explicit would be unwarrantable."

Joseph Jepson, the new manager, appeared to be a native of Westfield. According to the business directories, he had been janitor of the Westfield Normal School. Mr. Cary, principal of a grammar school in Pittsfield prior to entering the telephone business, had probably met him at the normal school



and recognized his capabilities. Mr. Jepson had been on call duty with the fire department for about six years, as foreman of No. 1 Extinguisher.

General Manager Cary appeared to have things moving well in Westfield, according to the *Republican* of August 18th: "The Telephone Company began putting instruments into the offices and stores today and expect to have the lines in operation and the central office running by Saturday. It will be a week or two before communications are made with Springfield, as wires are yet to be put up four or five miles."

The Westfield Exchange was opened August 21, 1880. There was evidently no fanfare or brass band to celebrate the occasion. The *Republican* refers to it laconically: "The Telephone Office was opened Saturday, 22 connections having been made. The wires were considerably used yesterday (Sunday), being a great novelty. The system will be open to Springfield in a week."

The local *Times and News-Letter*, in honor of the event, was a little more generous with its space than usual: "The town telephone is now in successful operation, the central office in charge of Joseph Jepson, being kept open night and day. Seventy-one subscribers have been procured, only part of whom have yet been supplied with instruments. The remainder will be supplied probably the last of the week, or as soon as the telephones can be obtained. The lines to Springfield, Little River, and Salmon Falls (Woronoco) are not yet completed, and it will probably take a week or ten days to finish them."

George H. Bliss, of Pittsfield, received his patent for the Individual Call bell Jan. 13, 1880. Westfield was not to be cheated of the honor of having an inventor, who was the first to devise such a contrivance. It was disclosed in the columns of the *Republican* of Sept. 3, 1880:

"Westfield lays claims to the original inventor of an individual call-bell for telephones as J. A. Larkin, the inventor and manufacturer of the automatic telephone which is coming into general use for short lines, sometime since devised a system of such call-bells, and filed a caveat thereof at Washington.

He claims that his system will operate over any length of wire without regard to the number of telephones on it. He is now arranging for a public exhibition of his invention at Westfield, operating upon 12 bells."

The *Times and News-Letter* on Oct. 13, 1880, reported more progress: "Salmon Falls and way stations are now connected by telephone with Westfield. Between 60 and 70 phones are now in constant use in this town. About 300 messages are sent to Springfield and Holyoke every month, and 150 are received. The local service is excellently served."

Certain ladies of Westfield appeared to possess stronger lower extremities than upper, according to a news item in the *Times and News-Letter*: "The ten mile ladies walking match in Music Hall for a purse of \$25 was won by Mrs. Glode (formerly Miss Tatro) in two hours and twenty-eight minutes. A full house witnessed the competition. Why is it that people will persist in educating their heels at the expense of their head?" Coincidentally, there appeared in the same issue the following: "One girl in the kitchen is worth two at the front gate." These slighting observations probably didn't worry the walking girls, because the more that came to look over their gaits—the better they liked it.

A tribute was paid Manager Jepson at this time by the *Republican*: "Manager Jepson, to whose care and supervision the success of the local exchange is due, gives the best of satisfaction to its patrons, and, it is said, runs the office at less expense than any of similar size under control of the company."

The early telephone managers were primarily plant men, and possessed considerable mechanical ability. Mention has been made of several who obtained patents on telephone equipment. Manager Jepson was also of an inventive turn, according to the Westfield *Times and News-Letter*: "Joseph Jepson, the popular manager of the telephone exchange in this town, has perfected and put into use his new telephone switchboard. It is a great improvement over the kind now generally used, enabling the operator to respond more quickly to several calls made at the same moment and also lessening

materially the work of adjusting switches. A patent has been applied for."

Two more communities were added to the Westfield "circuit" Aug. 11, 1881, according to the *Republican*: "Telephonic communication was made with Southwick Center yesterday and by the afternoon the instruments will be in operation at the Ponds, three miles further south. Talking through a wire is still a matter of wonder to the country people, and the workmen have had numerous requests for a sight of the hole in the wire through which the sound passes."

The *Times and News-Letter* added this information: "Telephones have been placed at the following points in Southwick: Depot, Pavilion, Riley's Point Grove, J. E. Rowell's, L. E. Thayer's store and Bennett Fowler's. The line will next be extended either from Southwick to Granville, or from Salmon Falls to Huntington."

On May 3rd, 1882, the resignation of Manager Jepson was made public in the *Times and News-Letter*: "The new local telephone manager is to be Charles Flint of the Adams exchange, and he assumed control yesterday. Ex-Manager Jepson is to remain a portion of this week to assist him and will then enter the employ of the Connecticut Telephone Company where he gets an increase in pay. Edward Flint who has been night operator at the Westfield exchange, is promoted to the management of the Adams office."

In the same issue appeared Mr. Jepson's resignation from the fire department: "Joseph Jepson, who has been connected with the fire department for eight years, has resigned as foreman of No. 1 extinguisher and Dr. G. A. Walkley has been elected to fill the vacancy. Mr. Jepson is a good fireman."

The subject of fire alarm signals appeared to be the new Manager's first important business, the town having voted \$110 for a line between the two engine houses. Manager Flint put telephone and fire alarm bells into the Arnold Street and North Elm Street engine houses, an alarm box near the corner of Elm and Franklin Streets and a bell in Chief Engineer Whipple's apartments at the Willmarth house. The *Republican* of July 6th describes how the system operated: "The policemen will have keys to the alarm box, and when the bell

is struck the alarm will instantly be transmitted to Engineer Whipple, the engine houses and telephone office. From the latter, the various subscribers to the telephone who are interested in fires will be given the news by the regulation fire ring."

Having got the fire alarm signals working to everybody's satisfaction, and it being the middle of August, Manager Flint decided to take a week's vacation. It was arranged that his namesake, Manager Flint of the Adams exchange, would take charge during his absence.

This terminates the events that occurred in Westfield during the regime of the Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. The story of this exchange will be resumed in Chapter 11. A few items regarding the affairs of the town were selected during the perusal of these early newspapers, and they provide the information given below.

Westfield, in 1880, enjoyed a town government, having a population of 7587. Its chief industries were the manufacture of whips and cigars and were represented by 39 cigar factories, 8 seed and leaf tobacco dealers, and forty companies, engaged in the different branches of whip manufacturing. There were also a few paper mills, notably Crane Bros., and the Woronoco Paper Mills. The H. B. Smith Steam Boiler Works and Foundry were established in 1853. 1800 persons were employed in manufactories, 500 being women.

The High School in 1880 had an enrollment of 141, of which 40 belonged to the entering class. The Normal School, established at Barre, Mass., in 1839, was removed to Westfield in 1844. In 1881 there were about 125 pupils in the School, which was located on Washington Street, corner of School. A good many students from Springfield and West Springfield went over on the "Scoot" train at 7:15 and returned at 6 in the evening.

A few items in lighter vein are quoted from the *Times and News-Letter*:

Next Friday an excursion train to Coney Island will run over the Canal Road. Five hours in New York and three on Coney Island are promised. Round trip \$1.50. Leave 6:08.

Turkeys are twenty cents a pound and scarce at that. Why

don't our farmers raise more turkeys? It would seem that they might be raised at a good profit at such a price.

A little fellow who wore striped stockings was asked why he made barber poles of his legs. His pert reply was "Well, ain't I a little shaver?"

#### GREENFIELD EXCHANGE

Greenfield did not make much headway in procuring a telephone exchange while under the domain of the Western Mass. Telephone Co. In 1880 it had a population of only 3903. It was compact in itself, and did not require the telephone as much as some other places. The telegraph and U.S. mail appeared to satisfy their communication needs. At the beginning of 1881, the Western Union Telegraph Co. was connecting private residences and places of business with their office at the depot to enable their customers to signal for messenger boys.

In the summer of 1881, however, an agent of the Western Mass. Telephone Co. partly canvassed the town for subscribers to an exchange. If 50 were obtained within a radius of 15 miles, the wires would be put up that summer. The canvass, however, did not come up to expectations, and another lull ensued.

About a year later, May 16, 1882, the *Republican* reviewed the situation thus: "About the only telephones now used in the town are the private wires of the Spurr Manufacturing Co., running from the telegraph office to their factory, and that of A. N. Hull, from his office to the depot. Those who have telephones on private lines pay \$10 for each phone and the same for transmitters yearly, besides paying the expense of repairs, etc. Solon Wiley and others are making a move for establishing a telephone exchange at Greenfield and it is expected that a line will be opened this summer. The difficulty seems to have been that in districting the towns, Greenfield was allotted to the Northampton exchange and little has been done by that office to awaken an interest in this locality. It looks as if a profitable exchange could be made by joining Greenfield, Turners Falls, Deerfield and Shelburne Falls in one circuit."

It was not long before the directors of the Western Mass. Telephone Co. were busily engaged disposing of their Company, and Solon Wiley and associates were reluctant to proceed with establishing an independent "line." Consequently, another exasperating delay occurred, which was climaxed by the fulfilment of their hopes, when a new and larger company was formed—The Bay State Telephone Co.; an account of which is given in Chapter 12.

## CHAPTER 7

### *Start of the Palmer Exchange*

THE first reference to a telephone message in Palmer was made in a joking manner by the *Palmer Journal* a few months after Alexander Graham Bell's exhibition in Springfield, and when the telephone was regarded by most people as a high class toy: "We learn by telephone that a detachment of the Robyourhenroost tribe of Indians has escaped from the Chicken Territory and you'd better lock up your hen-house until after Thanksgiving."

However, an article appeared in the *Journal* March 27, 1880, which was written in a more serious vein: "The telephone line from the freight office of the New London Northern Railroad in Palmer to Monson is now complete and works finely, making it as easy to talk with a person in Monson as it is with one in the same room."

On April 10, 1880, another article appeared: "Telephonic communication with the counting room at Three Rivers (Otis Company's Palmer Mills) has been completed, and as there is already a line from there to Ware (Otis Co.), conversation can now be held at the New London freight office in Palmer with both of those villages. The line works very nicely. The freight office is soon to be connected in like manner with J. F. Holbrook's coal office. On Wednesday evening through connection was made between Monson and Ware, communication being carried on without any difficulty, while music at Monson was heard and enjoyed at the freight office in Palmer. There is now some talk of making connection with Springfield via Three Rivers and North Wilbraham."

On May 1, 1880, the *Journal* reported that the manufac-

turing companies and C. Hitchcock of Ware were about to erect a telephone line to the depot, and on May 15th the same paper announced: "The new telephone lines, all having connection with the Ware depot as well as with each other, now have instruments at the counting rooms of the Otis Co., George H. Gilbert Manufacturing Co., C. A. Stevens & Co., C. Hitchcock's store, the Hampshire House, Caryl Brothers and C. C. Hitchcock's residence."

These private line installations didn't seem to satisfy the publisher of the *Palmer Journal*, G. M. Fisk, who uttered this plaint in his paper of July 17th: "Why don't Palmer have a telephone line connecting with Springfield and our neighboring villages? Up in Berkshire County nearly every town is supplied with these modern methods of communication, and it would seem to be about time that something was done in that line here."

Three months passed without anything being done, however, and then the Boston & Albany Railroad decided to connect with this private line system, according to the *Journal* of October 16th: "Telephones are soon to be placed in the Boston & Albany depot and freight house in Palmer, connect with the New London Northern freight office, and through that with Monson, Ware and Three Rivers."

These articles may have caught the eye of an official of the Central Mass. Telephone Co. Anyhow, on November 27, 1880, the readers of the *Journal* were greatly pleased to read: "An officer of the telephone company has been looking over the ground the past week with a view to connecting this place with Boston and Springfield by telephone. Such an arrangement would be a great convenience to our business men, but it is not yet known whether it will be brought about. A step in this direction, however, has been taken, in the purchase by the Central Mass. Tel. Co., of the old Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph Co.'s wires between Springfield and Worcester, and communication will soon be opened between those cities."

A couple of weeks later this telegraph line was put into telephonic use, but the telephone company must have decided it wasn't feasible to connect anyone at Palmer to the line.

However, it wasn't long before the company decided it



might be better to have an exchange in Palmer, and it must have given Mr. Fisk great satisfaction to publish under the "Palmer and Vicinity" column the following paragraph on April 9, 1881: "The Central Mass. Tel. Co. is putting in wires preparatory to opening an office and establishing the telephone service in this place. The central office will be in the store occupied by W. R. Milligan and F. D. Barton, where a switch-board has already been put in, and the village will be canvassed in a few days by Chas. F. Fish and George A. Rice for the subscribers. The Central Mass. Tel. Co. controls the territory between Springfield and Boston, outside of the large places, and owns the old Franklin telegraph line, over which its messages are conveyed. When the Palmer office is opened, conversation can be carried on with Hartford, Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, Indian Orchard, Ludlow, North Wilbraham, Worcester, Boston and numerous intermediate points, and before long nearly every town on the line of the railroad will doubtless be connected with the system. The charge for five minutes' conversation with other towns will vary somewhere from 15 to 75 cents, according to distance. Subscribers can, of course, talk with parties anywhere on the same circuit (exchange) without extra charge, and as Monson and Three Rivers are on the same circuit with this place, there will be no charge for those places. There are now 400 telephones in use in Springfield, 277 in Holyoke, 800 in Worcester, and so on, and our business men will probably not be behind those of other places in availing themselves of the advantages of this wonderful instrument. Connection has already been made with Springfield and conversation has been carried on with Hartford with perfect ease and distinctness."

Again on April 30th another report was given:

"The telephone company have put up several new posts in Main Street this week to support the wires, and are stretching the wires and putting in instruments for the subscribers, who now number 18. The company have decided to have their central office in a room by itself and have engaged a room in Commercial block, over Brooks' jewelry store, for this purpose."

The date of the official opening of the Palmer Exchange was May 1, 1881, and this milestone in the history of the town was reported in the *Journal's* weekly issue of May 7th:

“The work of putting up the telephone wires and instruments in this place has been completed and all are now in working order, with 38 telephones in this district—21 in this village and 17 in Monson. The State Primary school will have an instrument before long, and others will doubtless be put in the village, as people become acquainted with its advantages. Mrs. Emma Weeman will have charge of the central office in Commercial Block, with E. W. Plumley as assistant.”

Reference has been made to the New London Northern Railroad. The section from New London to Palmer via Norwich, Willimantic and Stafford Springs opened in 1850 and its projection to Belchertown, Amherst, Millers Falls and Brattleboro was completed in 1853. It now constitutes the lower extremity of the Central Vermont Railroad. In the days when its Palmer freight office was the center of the private telephone systems, it was mentioned in the *Journal* quite frequently for its excursions to Mount Tobey in Sunderland and to Martha's Vineyard.

The switch board having been installed, and a capable lady engaged to operate it day times (there was no Sunday or night operator until later) and look after the office with the help of an able assistant, there remained the task of connecting the new applicants to the central office. The first report of such activity appeared in the May 28, 1881, *Journal*: “Another telephone wire has been put in between Monson and Palmer this week, to accommodate the increasing business, and a wire has been run to the State Primary School. (Later the site of the Monson State Hospital.)

The next week's *Journal* reported that Foskets' Mills had been connected, and parties in Brimfield were talking of having the line extended to that village.

On June 18th it was reported that the new Monson line was in operation with the following subscribers: Dr. Geo. E.

Fuller, Monson House, Charles R. Dudley, Greens Hotel, and G. W. Burdick.

The *Journal* carried a sparkling article in the July 2nd issue about old demon lightning, which played such havoc until subdued by better lightning arrestors: "People will do well not to attempt any conversation over their telephones during a thunderstorm, or immediately before or after one, unless they want to find out how lightning tastes, or perhaps receive a shock of electricity in their ears. The lightning plays around in the wires quite freely during a storm, and talks through the telephones in a snapping and crackling voice that suggests the wisdom of allowing the electric fluid to monopolize the wires for the time being."

The first of September, poles were being drawn to Wales to connect with the Brimfield line to Palmer, and telephones were to be put in at E. Shaw's office, E. D. Shaw's office, Hubbard Bros.' store, E. Cady's store and Royce Hotel. They expected to get them running the next week, when a long felt need would be supplied. The completion of this job was given in the Sept. 24th paper: "The telephone boxes are now put in, and everybody wants to talk, much to the annoyance of old operators on the line."

There followed a courteous and considerate act, which seemed to herald the approach of the millenium, and which was recounted in the *Journal* of Sept. 10th: "The poles of the American Rapid Telegraph Co. have been re-set through the town this week, to carry the wires further from the telephone wires. This has had to be done for a large part of the distance between here and Boston, as well as on other parts of the line, the current on the Rapid wires being so strong as to interfere with telephone communications over the other wires."

The line to Brimfield was strung in quick order, and seemed to be appreciated according to the *Journal*: "Four telephones have been put into running order here within about a week. They prove at once to be of value to the community in bringing speedy news from Palmer, Springfield and elsewhere. The citizens of the town appreciate its benefits."

Up to this time, the Palmer exchange had belonged to the Central Mass. Tel. Co. However, on Sept. 17, 1881, the *Re-*

*publican* announced that the Massachusetts Telephone Co. had been chartered with \$150,000 capital in shares of \$100. A month later, more information appeared about this new company: "The Massachusetts Telephone Co., the prominent members of which have a controlling interest in the Hampden Telephone Co., of Springfield, has succeeded largely to the business of the Central Massachusetts Co., the Southern Worcester and the Orange telephone companies, and owns the main line from Boston to Springfield, with branches to Clinton, Medford, and Milford, besides the various local systems of the old companies. The only exchange between Springfield and Boston not under their management is the one in the towns near Worcester. The company is also building lines from Worcester to Southbridge, from Palmer to Brimfield and Wales, an extension of the Milford line to East Douglas and new lines from Worcester to Boston, and Athol, and Gardner to Fitchburg. The principal men in the management are Charles F. Cutler, Willis M. Ranney, Joel C. Clark of South Framingham, George L. Phillips of Boston, C. A. Nichols of Springfield and George S. Trowbridge of Newton."

Thus the Palmer exchange came under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Telephone Co.

The newspapers were not adorned with comic pictures, but this deficiency was made up, in part, by occasional witticisms and humorous jibes such as these, taken from the *Journal*: "The style of dressing hair with the ladies now is about nip and tuck between the door knob and pitcher handle patterns.—The Monson milkmen are looking more cheerful now the the ice is broken up.—An exchange states that there are only twenty-five match factories in this country. Pshaw! There are more than that number in Palmer, and in every other well regulated town. If you don't believe it, ask the ladies."

The telephone was, no doubt, of greatest value to the medical profession. This was brought out in the *Journal* of Feb. 4, 1882: "Telephones have been placed in Hitchcock & Co.'s drug store and the offices of Doctors Warren and Downing this week. All our physicians now have these talking instruments in their offices."

A report of the number of telephones in the Palmer ex-

change was given in the *Journal* of Feb. 11, 1882: "The local telephone exchange, which was started last May with 38 subscribers, has grown until it now numbers 72, while additions are constantly being made to the list. Of this number Palmer has 33, Monson 26, Brimfield 5, Wales 5, Ware 2, and Three Rivers 1."

Negotiations were started at this time to erect an interstate line, which was referred to in the *Journal* of February 18th: "There is talk of making telephonic connections with Stafford Springs. The Mass. Telephone Co. offer to furnish and put in the wire if the Stafford company will set the poles."

The growth of the Palmer exchange necessitated a new switchboard, and the following details were learned from the *Journal*: It was a 50 wire switchboard and was installed during the week ending March 25, 1882, to make room for the business expected in the spring. It was twice the capacity of the old board, and did away with the bell board; thus, dispensing entirely with the ringing of bells in the office, which was so constant and tiresome with the old board. This improved board was arranged to accommodate two operators at the same time, if necessary. The central office call was now one ring instead of two. A portion of the office was partitioned off for a sleeping room, and night service was expected to be in working order in a few days. It had been announced previously that E. W. Plumley, Mrs. Weeman's former assistant and now in the Springfield office, would return to Palmer as night operator, but he decided to remain in Springfield even though offered a position as day operator. Rufus Taplin was, thereupon, appointed to the nocturnal position, which was expected to go into effect the first week in April, 1882.

The completion of the Three Rivers and Thorndike job was reported on July 29th: "The Palmer telephone exchange has been extended so as to include Doctors Ruggles and Holbrook and D. F. Holden at Three Rivers, and Clark & Hastings and the Thorndike Co. at Thorndike. Connection has also been made with the wire mill. Telephones are also placed in the meat markets of C. H. Keith and D. H. Brown in Palmer village, and in Loomis Bros.' furniture ware rooms."

A note of caution was furnished by the *Journal* for the bene-

fit of these new subscribers: "The telephone connection between Three Rivers, Thorndike and Palmer is completed, but the patrons of the line should study the different 'calls' more carefully, that 'medicine' and 'beef' may not get so badly mixed."

In August, night operator Taplin became indisposed, and the night service at the telephone office had to be discontinued for a few days.

The following report is of especial interest, as it gives further information regarding the Mass. Telephone Co. It appeared in the *Palmer Journal* of Aug. 19, 1882: "The Mass. Telephone Co. have published a revised list of their subscribers which now numbers 631, divided among the different exchanges as follows: Palmer, 82; Gardner, 64; Marlboro and Hudson, 52; Clinton, 52; Milford, 49; Framingham, 47; Southbridge, 41; Orange, 32; Athol, 29; Natick, 29; Webster, 29; Winchendon, 22; Spencer, 20; Holliston, 19; Westboro, 19; North Brookfield, 18; East Brookfield, 9; Hopkington, 6; Oxford, 4; Ashland, 3; Warren, 3; West Brookfield, 2.

Palmer had the distinction of having the largest exchange, a tribute to the discernment and perspicacity of the people in this part of the state.

A brief description of Palmer and its neighboring communities in 'ye olden days,' as gleaned from some items in the *Journal*, may be of interest.

The census enumerators, in the spring of 1880, reported the population of Palmer as 5505 against 4572 in 1875. The population of the village was 1420; Three Rivers, 1306; Thorndike, 1155; Bondville, 782. Other towns in the vicinity of Palmer were enumerated as follows: Ware, 4815; Monson, 3758; Enfield, 1043; Wales, 1023; Holland, 302.

Palmer was somewhat of a railroad center and a thriving textile community. The Boston & Albany gave its stockholders a free excursion to Boston to attend the annual meetings. Upon reporting these events, the *Journal* never failed to add a humorous jibe such as: "The ladies had a fine day for their shopping. The stockholders turned out *en masse*, though only about 200 actually went to the meeting;—but it was a good day for the merchants at the Hub."

The Otis Co.'s large plant in Ware employed about 1200, and its Palmer Mills, at Three Rivers, was equipped with 700 looms. The Boston Duck Co. of Bondville shipped nearly 200,000 yards one day. The Palmer Carpet Co. operated 20 looms and turned out 600, or more, yards every day. The Palmer Wire Co. started to manufacture wire for fence purposes in August of 1882. The Blake and Co. of Warren were building a 50 ton pump for Omaha.

A graphic description of the affairs in West Warren was given by the *Journal*: "Business prosperous, mills running full blast and the sound of carpenters' hammers heard in every direction, give the impression that West Warren will grow."

Monson's two straw shops were rushing on spring orders, and the woolen mills and quarry were having their full quota of help.

Hampden's Lacowsic Mill was busy, and its two hat mills, employing 60 hands, turned out 1200 dozen hats a day.

In Wales, there was the Wales Mill, which made shirting cloth, and the Dell Mill.

Stores remained open evenings, but in 1885 there was talk of closing two evenings in the week.

The popular forms of entertainment were: dancing at Wales Hall, with a supper served at the Tockwotton House for one dollar a couple; roller skating to the music of the Palmer Band; sleigh rides to Landlord Segar of the Allen House, Hampden; bicycle riding; and theatrical performances, featuring the "original and only Wilkinsons," Uncle Tom's Cabin, and Amos Whiting Chorus,—general admission 25 cents, reserved seats 35.

The Bay State Telephone Co. now comes upon the scene, and the Palmer Exchange makes its exit until Chapter 11.

## CHAPTER 8

### *Hampden Telephone Company Springfield-Holyoke Exchanges*

THE organization of the Hampden Telephone Co. was effected Sept. 30, 1881; and the papers of the *Springfield Daily Republican*, coming off the press that day, contained an up to the minute report of this rather intricate transaction:

“A new telephone company has been formed and has bought out the Springfield Telephone Co., the papers being executed today. The new company is formed partly of members of the present local one and partly of members of the Central Mass. Telephone Co., whose central office is in South Framingham, taking in Westboro, Natick, and most of the towns in that region. C. F. Cutler is president; C. A. Nichols, vice president; J. C. Clark, general manager; W. M. Ranney, treasurer of the new company, which is called the “Hampden.” These four, with H. S. Hyde of the Springfield Company, form the board of directors. C. F. Cutler and W. M. Ranney hold the same offices in the Central Mass. Telephone Co. The new company has a capitalization of \$120,000. The sale will not at present interfere with the rates and usages of the local system, but it is intended ultimately to result in a corporation covering the whole state, by the consolidation of the various small companies. Of these, the principal ones now are The Western Mass. Tel. Co., the new Hampden Telephone Co., the company at Worcester and the Central Mass. Telephone Co., Boston and vicinity being supplied by the American Bell Co.



Under a state company the rates could be made more even, and the new Hampden company promise to accommodate this city and Holyoke better in several ways before long, and, although separate from the Central, the two will work in harmony. The Springfield Company's business has been the most prosperous in its history."

The Springfield and Holyoke exchanges now came under the direction of Joel C. Clark, General Manager, although the local management remained the same, Frank G. Daboll being the Springfield Manager and Charles B. Perkins the Manager at Holyoke.

The Springfield *Republican* announced Nov. 26, 1881: "The special telephone line between the office of the water commissioners and the gate-house at Ludlow is finished and communication was opened Thanksgiving day. The line is wholly independent of all other wires and works to a charm." (The city water works has been municipally owned since 1872.)

The Hampden Telephone Co. received commendation in the *Republican* of Jan. 17, 1882: "The Hampden Telephone Co. have distributed their revised list of all their subscribers in the county, thus giving a reference book that has long been needed. The book also contains a tariff for conversations with places on the connecting lines and instructions for using the instruments. The thoroughness with which the important towns of this section are brought into the system may be shown by the fact that from this city 67 towns and villages in this state and Conn. can be communicated with by telephone. There are today 523 instruments here, and over 300 in Holyoke and Chicopee."

On Feb. 2, 1882, the poles to Wilbraham were all set and ready for the wires; and on Feb. 11th, the wires were up. About a month later the *Republican* reported that a public telephone office is to be opened at the hotel in Wilbraham as soon as another wire is put up. This hotel was the Allis House conducted by Mrs. Allis, and which received this praiseworthy comment from the *Palmer Journal*: "The table was spread with nice things which are so characteristic of this hotel."

The following Holyoke item appeared in the *Republican* that month: "Manager Charles Perkins is to put in an auxiliary switch-board at the telephone office, which will be in charge of Miss Maggie Heidner." A happy sequel was soon forthcoming: "Telephone Manager C. B. Perkins was quietly married to Miss Maggie Heidner last evening and they have gone on a tour through the nutmeg state."

Induction or cross talk between wires on the same poles had caused a great deal of concern to the young industry. An interesting experiment to overcome this difficulty was reported by the *Republican* of April 17, 1882: "The American Bell Telephone Co. propose laying underground cables between Attleboro and West Mansfield as an experiment. The cable, which is five miles long, was made at Providence at a cost of \$10,000."

A few days later another item regarding this project appeared: "The cable was to be laid in furrows along the track of the Boston and Providence railroad, but the good farmers of the vicinity refused the loan of their oxen for ungodly Sunday toil. The plow was accordingly attached by a beam to a locomotive and the five-mile furrow turned up as fast as the legs of the man at the plow would admit. The work will be finished next Sunday, when in all 58,000 pounds of wire will have been laid."

Holyoke received visits from old demon lightning, the same as other communities: "The telephone linemen generally have their hands pretty full after a thunder-shower, repairing damages. During the storm of Tuesday evening, 36 instruments were disabled and had to be replaced, and many of the wires were out of order. Manager Perkins has not taken out an instrument for three months because of any fault, and has added eleven new subscribers to his list within a month. The service now rendered by the local office will probably compare favorably with any city in the country."

The Holyoke office appeared to be favored with more publicity than the new Springfield office in the Kinsman's block, at this particular time. "The telephone company, tired of the rather free use made of their lines, have posted orders that

none but subscribers shall hereafter send messages. To accommodate others, a phone has been put in and a pay-office established at M. A. Allen's store on High Street, and there are to be other stations at South Holyoke and South Hadley Falls."

The *Republican* of Jan. 15, 1881, announced that the articles of incorporation of the Springfield Electric Light Co., with headquarters at Blair & Fiske's, were to be sent to Boston for approval. Blair & Fiske manufactured lawn mowers and on Jan. 21, 1881, began to experiment with the use of incandescent electric lamps for evening work in the factories. The first generator of the Electric Light Co. was located in the Blair & Fiske plant.

The Springfield Electric Light Co., which was capitalized for \$10,000, had the following officers and directors: President, Gideon Wells; Secretary, H. S. Hyde; Clerk, W. J. Denver; directors, G. Wells, H. S. Hyde, C. A. Nichols, L. J. Powers and H. C. Fiske. These men with the exception of Messrs. Wells and Fiske, served as officers, directors, or both, of the Springfield Telephone Co., when it was organized nearly two years previously.

The Fuller and Brush electric lights were being used somewhat but were too expensive for general use. A case was reported where two Brush lights of 2,000 candle power each would cost \$7,000, not to mention the cost of a generator, which would require 33 H.P. from some source. However, the thrilling effects of this mode of lighting were described by the *Republican*: "The advantages of this light for evening parties was forcibly illustrated at the fancy dress party at the skating rink when the beauty of the costumes was brought out more clearly, and the general effect was altogether pleasanter than on a similar occasion at Worcester where calcium lights were employed."

These were the days when New England was laying the ground work for its future greatness. The *Republican* reported: "The Ludlow Manufacturing Co. has purchased 1,500,000 bricks, preparatory to building a new mill the coming spring and summer. They are now being shipped to them from Holyoke."

Amicable relations between the Electric Light and Telephone companies started early: "The Springfield Electric Light Co. say that their wires are being insulated and placed upon high standards above the telephone wires, so that there is but little danger from their settling."

This same paper made known that the electric light wires have reached Walnut Street and will probably be in use by July 4, 1882.

The first street lighting by electricity must have caused the picturesque lamp lighter some forebodings as he trudged his route of vanishing oil and gas lamps. The following is from the July 22, 1882, *Republican*: "There are 60 electric lamps in use in the city and each one that is burned nightly has to be put in order just as though it were an oil lamp that needed trimming. The man in charge takes out the carbons which were burned the night before, so that their points may be ground over, replacing them with others that have been sharpened. The city electric lamps are soon to be provided with globes to protect them from the wind and give a steadier light. These lamps occasionally let fall pieces of burning carbon and people who pass under them will do well to be on their guard. Bad boys have been in the habit of lowering and raising the Court-Square lamp, according to their own sweet will, and the company have placed the end of the hoisting rope in a lock-box, attached to one of the trees, to end their sport."

The Hampden Telephone Co. had a brief existence, from Sept. 30, 1881, to Sept. 1, 1882, it being merged with the Bay State Telephone Co. on the latter date. An account of the Springfield and Holyoke exchanges, under the management of this new organization, will be found in Chapter 10.

## CHAPTER 9

### *Bay State Telephone Company*

THERE was located at Lowell a very powerful group of men, which had promoted a telephone system in and around Lowell that was briefly described in the *Republican* of March 31, 1881: "Lowell is said to be the largest telephone center in the country, being directly connected with over 100 cities and large towns in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. One company owns 2500 telephones, pays the American Bell Co. \$1,200. royalty a month, and controls over 1,500 miles of wire."

This enterprising group of men is again mentioned in the *Republican* of May 1, 1882: "The Boston & Northern Telephone Co., formed with a capital of \$500,000, has sold out to a company of men from Boston, Lowell and Worcester. Its rights cover Vermont, most of New Hampshire and Essex County in Mass., with right of way into Boston. This change in ownership is thought to indicate a contemplated consolidation of telephone interests in Eastern Mass. outside of Boston, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, such a union bringing together \$2,000,000 capital."

Then this momentous news was succinctly stated in the *Republican* of Aug. 30, 1882: "The Bay State Telephone Co. of Lowell has been incorporated with a capital of \$600,000, William A. Ingham, President."

The following day readers of the Springfield *Republican* began to realize that the telephone setup in Western Mass. was due for a drastic change: "The stockholders of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. will have an offer from the syndicate who

talk of buying it for about \$60 a share. The capital is about \$65,000 and only one dividend has been paid in two years.”

Another item the same day fully convinced the readers of the imminent change: “The consolidation of the Hampden and the Massachusetts Telephone Cos. into the new Bay State Co. is purely in the interest of economy. One management will now do the work of the two companies, but it is not likely that subscribers will ever discover the change save in a new style of bill-head. The transfer of the stock to the new company will be made Friday (Sept. 1, 1882) in Boston. Most of the stockholders in the old companies continue in the new one and some capital in the eastern part of the state is also invested.”

A more comprehensive description of the new company was given in the *Republican* of Sept. 2, 1882: “C. A. Nichols, President of the old Hampden Telephone Co., and W. M. Ranney, the Treasurer, went to Boston yesterday to transfer the stock of the old company to the purchasers. The transfer can hardly be called a sale, but is simply a consolidation with the Massachusetts Telephone Co. under the name of the Bay State Telephone Co., which has been incorporated with \$600,000 capital. The capital of the Massachusetts Telephone Co. was \$180,000, and it had about 700 subscribers and 1,000 miles of wire, while the capital of the Hampden Telephone Co. was \$120,000 and it had 900 subscribers. It is claimed that the consolidation will have great advantage. Neither company with its limited capital could meet the demands of the people, but together, with their capital doubled, and employing only one management, the facilities promise to be greatly increased. For instance, the telephonic accommodation between Worcester and Boston are not now sufficient, but the new company intend to put up a fourth wire this fall between those cities and as soon as the prospect is sufficiently encouraging will give Boston and Springfield direct communication. It is also expected that this new company will branch out still further as soon as advisable, and buy up the stock of the other companies till it will control all the lines in the state, and possibly all in New England. In fact, negotiations are already being made to this end, and the stockholders of the Western Mass. Tel. Co. yesterday authorized the directors to sell the

stock to the Bay State Telephone Co., if satisfactory terms could be agreed upon. The transfer will probably be made and this will afford Springfield still greater advantages, for a direct telephonic communication will then be established between Springfield, Pittsfield, North Adams and all the other Berkshire towns in the Western circuit. It is also quite possible that by this concerted action all the important cities in the state, and perhaps New England, will be eventually connected. The directors of the Bay State Telephone Co. are very sanguine and there seems to be no reason why, with the large capital and new life infused into the business, their predictions may not be fulfilled.

“The consolidation will in no way affect the subscribers of the old Hampden Telephone Co., for the management and rates will remain the same for the present. The new company will probably declare a 2 per cent dividend January 1. These are the new officers: President, William A. Ingham of Lowell; Treasurer, Charles J. Glidden of Lowell; General Manager, Loren N. Downs of Lowell; directors: W. A. Ingham, C. J. Glidden, L. N. Downs all of Lowell; C. A. Nichols of Springfield; C. F. Cutler of South Framingham; S. H. Howe of New Marlboro; T. N. Vail of Boston.”

The Sunday *Republican* of Jan. 30, 1884, printed a lengthy article entitled “Telephone Fortunes” which was taken from the *Boston Globe*. It seems that most of the officers and directors of the new Bay State Telephone Co. were fortunate enough to be included among those “tycoons” who had acquired “fortunes,” and a few references to them are enlightening, although, no doubt, exaggerated: “Then there is the Lowell Syndicate. The principals are Charles J. Glidden, William A. Ingham and Loren N. Downs. . . . Of these men, Mr. Glidden was a telegraph operator and started the telephone business by getting the right for Lowell, and out of this has grown all the business of the so-called Lowell Syndicate. Mr. Ingham was a successful grocer and was worth perhaps \$30,000 or \$40,000. He furnished the first substantial aid to Glidden. Mr. Downs was the chief operator of the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph Co. in Boston. The street credits Glidden and Ingham with now being worth \$1,000,000

apiece with perhaps three-quarters of a million for Downs.”

Thomas Watson in his autobiography, *Exploring Life*, tells of interviewing Theodore Vail in Washington relative to his joining the American Bell Telephone Co. as General Manager. Watson was so sure that the Superintendent of the United States railway mail service was the right man for them that he wired Mr. Hubbard to hire Mr. Vail if he could see his way to paying him the large salary he wanted,—thirty-five hundred dollars!

The promoters of the Bay State Telephone Co. spent some time negotiating for the purchase of the Western Mass. Telephone Co., which was finally consummated, but at a higher price than the Easterners were at first disposed to pay. The details of the transaction were reported in the *Republican* of Sept. 12, 1882: “The stockholders of the Western Mass. Telephone Co. unanimously voted yesterday to instruct the directors to transfer for \$50,000 their property and leases of every kind to Joel C. Clark of Framingham. Henry W. Taft was chosen to receive the money from Clark, pay the company’s debts (about \$6,000), transfer the stock and pay the stockholders their dividend (about \$90 a share). Mr. Clark takes the management in a day or two. The company passed a vote of thanks to President Bliss for his two years’ service.” The transaction was consummated Sept. 13, 1882.

The formation of the Bay State Telephone Co. was now practically complete, being an amalgamation of the Massachusetts Telephone Co., which served most of the territory between Springfield and Boston; The Hampden Telephone Co., which owned the Springfield and Holyoke exchanges; and the Western Mass. Telephone Co., which controlled the territory in Massachusetts west of the Connecticut River, with exchanges in Pittsfield, North Adams, Adams, Northampton and Westfield. The Greenfield and Great Barrington exchanges had not yet been started.

The Adams *Transcript* of Dec. 14, 1882, announced that the North River Telephone Co. had been sold to the Bay State Telephone Co. and also imparted this information: “The Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co.’s stock has been sold to the Bay State Telephone Co. for about \$20 per share.”



Advances in the telephone art were steadily progressing. The following item appeared in the *Republican* of March 6, 1883: "The Telephone Dispatch Co. of Boston is using two underground cables in Boston, and finds that the induction is not so bad as in aerial cables. They consist of a combination of 50 small copper wires, insulated and protected by a coating of lead, the whole not exceeding an inch in diameter."

On June 4, 1883, according to the *Republican*, the Bay State Telephone Co. had 2525 subscribers, an increase of 1033 in eight months. The earnings of the past eight months were \$30,695 and \$13,800 was paid in dividends.

Another article appeared in the *Republican* of Sept. 10, 1883, relative to the telephone "tycoons," of Lowell: "The Lowell Telephone Syndicate now control 19,680 subscribers, 4,000 on the National Bell Telephone Co.'s lines of Maine, 3,600 on the Boston and Northern, 2,800 on the Bay State, 1,400 on the Suburban (Boston), 430 on the Granite State, 450 on the Union and 7,000 on the Erie, and they say their subscribers are growing at the rate of 1,000 a month."

The Erie Telephone Co., often mentioned, passed into the hands of the Telephone, Telegraph and Cable Co. in 1900, according to the *Daily Republican*, at which time the Erie Co. owned five companies operating under Bell licenses in the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arkansas, Texas, and Cuyahoga County in Ohio. Charles J. Glidden of Lowell was President, but he resigned about a year after the transfer of ownership.

The Bay State Telephone Co. continued in business a little over a year; and then its stockholders, at a meeting in Lowell Oct. 17, 1883, voted unanimously in favor of consolidating with a new company about to be formed—The New England Telephone and Telegraph Co.

## CHAPTER 10

### *Bay State Telephone Company Springfield-Holyoke Exchanges*

THE Bay State Telephone Co., having acquired the Hampden Telephone Co. Sept. 1, 1882, and the Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. Sept. 13th of that year, created two additional divisions—the Springfield and the Western (Pittsfield).

The telephone folks had a good deal of trouble because some subscribers left their levers half up, and kept others from using the line. There was no way of knowing who the subscriber was, so the Central had to send a man out to check the telephones on the line until he came to the guilty party.

This trouble was soon remedied by the invention of the automatic switch, which was operated by the weight of the instrument.

Improvements to the telephone service were mentioned in a Holyoke news item: "Manager Perkins has been furnishing the telephone subscribers with generators (operated by a crank) in place of the local battery current, for signaling the central office, and establishing a system of open circuits which will be appreciated as soon as people become used to them. Lines having too many stations have been divided and other improvements made."

William J. Denver, who had played such a prominent part in the establishment and management of the Springfield Telephone Co., withdrew from the telephone field, when the Western Union Telegraph Co. sold its interests to the Bell Telephone Co. He thereupon confined his attention, for a time,

exclusively to the telegraph business. There now appeared an article about Mr. Denver in the *Republican* of March 20, 1883: "William J. Denver, the efficient manager of the Springfield office of the Western Union Telegraph Co., has been offered the management of the Washington Telephone Co. at an advance of salary. Whether he will close with this offer is not yet settled. He would probably prefer to remain here, other things being equal, and it remains to be seen whether the Western Union Co. will meet the other company on salary. Certainly Springfield would regret to lose Mr. Denver."

The Holyoke telephone exchange had 360 subscribers March 1, 1883, which required over 90 lines. New names were being added every month and the number was expected to reach 400 before long. Manager Perkins, accordingly, had plans drawn for a cable house, to be placed on the roof of the Parsons Hall block, which would contain 150 lines.

The many friends of William J. Denver were undoubtedly pleased to read this item in the May 16th *Republican*: "It is a pleasure to announce that Manager Denver of the Western Union Telegraph office has decided to remain in Springfield and to retain the position that he has so admirably filled for many years."

There now follows a pathetic piece from the pen of a *Republican* reporter, giving an intimate story of the afflictions borne by telephone officials:

### *The Woes of the Telephone Men*

The telephone managers in this city are meeting with perplexing obstacles in their efforts to improve the service by cutting up the long circuits. They began two months ago to increase the number of circuits, with a view to reducing the number of stations on individual circuits. About 25 circuits have been thus improved, but there are as many more that need pruning, before the service can be perfected. The overcrowded lines are mostly in the outskirts, at least not in the thickly built business parts of the city. It would seem that such lines might be the easiest to divide, the only consideration being the labor of putting up the wires, but this roseate view is one that the telephone people are not favored with. If they

suggest the necessity of putting another wire over a house, the proprietor, whether a telephone subscriber or not, generally says that he would rather have the wires already on the house taken down than to have another put up. If a reason is asked, the householder either refuses to give one, or brings forward the absurd notion that telephone wires attract lightning, or he falls back on the more tenable claim that wires don't improve the looks of a dwelling. Yet the only way of stringing wires is from house-top to house-top. They can't be run underground on account of the induction of earth currents, and the city fathers have persistently refused to allow the telephone company to erect poles. Every man's house is his castle, they say, so if there is no way of obliging a man to lend his house for a telephone pole, there is no resort but to the obdurate city government. The company want to set poles in some of the "side streets" east of Chestnut and Maple Streets, claiming that their neatly painted poles would not be unsightly, at least they would not look so badly as the heavy, sagging, electric light wires. They claim, too, that the interference with ladders in case of fire is less, outside the business part of the city, with wires on poles than with wires on housetops.

The Springfield exchange was brought up to the minute with a new switchboard on Sept. 22, 1883, and the *Republican* spoke of this and another pressing problem: "Cut off from the old to the new switchboard today and it will take some time for the operators to get the hang of the new arrangement. The new arrangement, 7 small boards, are now in operation each having its operator. The most marked improvement in contemplation is that of cutting up the circuits. Good work cannot be expected on a circuit which has over four stations. Some circuits in the city are now made to serve from 7 to 12 subscribers."

George H. Cary, General Manager of the Western Mass. Telephone Co., had planned to build a toll line from Pittsfield to Springfield by way of Dalton, Cummington and Williamsburg, but his resignation from the company upset these plans. The Bay State Telephone Co. revived this project but decided upon another route via Lee, Chester and Westfield, which was referred to in the Oct. 3, 1883, *Republican*: "The

telephone exchanges in Western Mass. have been put in connection with the Bay State Telephone Co., so that anyone connected with the Springfield office can now talk with every sizeable town in Berkshire County. A similar advantage is gained by the wire which now connects Palmer with Stafford Springs and Willimantic."

The following two articles are quoted from the *Republican* to show how great a factor the lowly bicycle had become in the life of the nation: "The managers of the ball in honor of the Springfield bicycle club, which is to wind up the festivities Thursday evening, are preparing for "the best" all through. Col. Beals is decorating the city hall and Orr & Company are printing a handsome souvenir program for the 'meet,' which the wheelmen will find to their taste.

"Over 700 bicyclists were in the city yesterday and over 200 slept last night in Hampden Park. The Rutland, Vermont, boys, 20 strong, came down in a special car last evening. Among the clubs already arrived are the Ramblers of Boston, the Boston bicycle club, the Poughkeepsie, Rochester, Buffalo and Albany clubs. The New York delegation will arrive by special train this noon. There will probably be 300 wheelmen among them, as clubs from the vicinity of New York are with them."

"At this time of the year, the young man's fancy turneth to a \$140 bicycle. It takes a long time to buy one on a salary of \$5 a week, but somehow or other the machine is secured by many an ambitious youth, who flatters himself that a dude can't ride one."

There now followed the final amalgamation of telephone companies, which resulted in the organization of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co.

## CHAPTER 11

### *Bay State Telephone Company* *Northampton - Palmer - Westfield Exchanges*

#### NORTHAMPTON EXCHANGE

THE stockholders of the Western Massachusetts Telephone Co., with headquarters at Pittsfield, voted to convey their holdings to the Bay State Telephone Co. effective Sept. 13, 1882. Thereupon, the Northampton and Westfield Exchanges were transferred to the Springfield division of the Bay State Telephone Co., which division then comprised the following exchanges: Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, Palmer, and Westfield. Frank G. Daboll, formerly the Manager of the Springfield exchange was appointed Superintendent of the Springfield division and George D. Sherwin was retained as Manager of the Northampton exchange, which started its new status with 137 subscribers, seven more than it boasted the first of the year.

The new telephone rates effective Oct. 1, 1882, were favorable to the subscribers. Heretofore the rates were on an annual basis, payable in advance. Now the Bay State Telephone Co. put them on a quarterly basis, \$10.75 for business places and \$8.25 for residences. A new feature entitled the subscriber to a 75 cent discount if his bill was paid by the 10th of the first month, 50 cents if paid by the 10th of the second month and 25 cents the third month. Thus, if a business customer profited by the 75 cent discounts, his outlay for the year would be \$40, the same as it had been. A residence subscriber, however,

would pay only \$30, as against \$34 previously. Of course these rates were for multi-party service.

The price for the Bliss Signal Clock, which had been \$3 a year, was raised to \$6. This device, patented by George H. Bliss, President of the former Western Mass. Telephone Co., had been receiving great acclaim. The purpose of the clock-like mechanism was to silence all the bells on a line except the one rung by the operator. The story was told, that when it was advertised that the telephones would be equipped so that conversations could not be overheard by any party on a line, except the one for whom it was intended, some scandal mongers immediately cancelled their contracts.

The following article, under the Hatfield news column in the *Gazette* of Oct. 31, is of particular interest as it is the first time any mention has been made of a construction charge. "The Bay State Telephone Co. offer to extend their wire from Northampton to Hatfield providing seven persons will engage to take instruments, costing annually \$30 each, and \$150 is raised to erect the necessary poles and wire to connect the center of the town with the Hatfield depot. The benefits of the telephone in connection with the telegraph are well understood; its establishment here would save many fruitless trips to Northampton and other towns, and much valuable time in expediting business; it would make the town more inviting to strangers as a desirable place of residence. We understand that an opportunity will soon be given our citizens to test their enterprise and public spirit; a paper will be circulated to secure the \$150 necessary to establish the telephone in this town."

While the paper was being circulated, attention will be given to another important suburb, which the *Republican* favored with this pleasing news: "Northampton is now to be connected with Amherst by telephone and Manager Sherwin is at work on the new line. It will leave the town at Prospect Street, running along the Massachusetts Central railroad route, so that poles will not be set in the villages. Amherst will become a part of the local exchange and regular subscribers will not be charged extra for using the new line."

On Thursday, November 9th, the *Republican* added that

several miles of wire between Northampton and Amherst were already strung and that the two places would be connected by Saturday. However, a surprising development occurred which was reported on November 14th: "Manager Sherwin of the telephone exchange goes to Amherst today to see if arrangements cannot be made for taking the telephone wires into that town. At present the work is stopped by a selectman who objects to the innovation."

The paper, which was being circulated about Hatfield, concluded its course; and the following report was rendered by the *Gazette*: "The arrangement with the Bay State Telephone Co. to extend their line of wire to Hatfield, Main Street, was consummated November 15, and the line is now in process of construction. It gives us pleasure to chronicle this fact, and our prospective telephonic and telegraphic connection with the near and distant business centers of the county. We are no longer to be isolated in the great bend of the Connecticut river, miles distant from any telegraph station, thanks to the energy and enterprise of our young men, and the contribution of the money required that was so freely made by our citizens, who anticipate the benefits to be derived therefrom to the people of the town. Several instruments will be placed in the new circuit at the following public places: Hatfield Depot, Shattuck's factory and S. H. Howard's store; also at the private dwellings of Hon. E. A. Hubbard, Rev. R. M. Woods, W. H. Dickinson, Dr. C. M. Barton and J. S. Wells."

The climax of this venture was described by the *Gazette* of Dec. 19, 1882: "The work of putting up the wire and setting up seven instruments constituting the Hatfield Branch of the Bay State Telephone Co. was completed the morning of December 16, and was put in active operation at once. Persons at near and distant points were hailed and interviewed in all possible directions and on all sorts of subjects; ladies gossiped, and even babies cried in the telephone, to the great edification of all parties at the several stations, and before night the manager of the central office at Northampton said the Hatfield was doing more business than all the rest of their lines. Young America, with his first tin whistle, was never more jubilant and demonstrative than some of the fortunate possessors of



instruments in our circuit, and people are happy in counting up its real and imagined benefits.”

The objection to the “innovation” by the Amherst selectman was overcome, and work was resumed on the pole line, which was completed the first week in December. A few financial aspects were reported by the *Republican* of December 7th: “The Bay State Telephone Co. have established a pay station at Duell’s drug store in Amherst and 10 cents is charged for 5 minutes use of the lines anywhere in the circuit (exchange) including Northampton, Leeds, Florence, Williamsburg, Hatfield, and Hadley. The charge for a message to Springfield is 25 cents. Thus far, only three instruments for private use have been put in.” The pay station referred to was not equipped with a coin box, the proprietor taking the money.

The Smith name appeared frequently in the *Hampshire Gazette* and *Northampton Courier*, especially that of Smith College, The Smith Foundation or Charities, and Smith Academy in Hatfield.

Ringville and news of this kind are not seen mentioned in the papers of today. “Mr. Ripley of Granville passed through here (Ringville) with a heavy pair of oxen, bought in Conway. He reports it hard to find good heavy oxen, and the prospect is that they are going to be high.”

The first telephone news of 1883 appeared in the Jan. 5th *Republican*: “Manager G. D. Sherwin of the local telephone exchange has been promoted and will take charge of larger territory in Vermont. A. E. Cross, who has been local operator, will take charge of the local exchange and Miss Hurd from the Lowell exchange will act as day operator.” It will be observed that girls were beginning to replace the young men as operators. Manager Sherwin’s assignment was in Burlington, Vermont.

The Hatfield telephone line appeared to be giving satisfaction, according to this *Gazette* item: “The telephone is found to be a very convenient agency for the easy transaction of business and a great benefit to the community.”

The telephone was gaining favor. In April there were 171 subscribers, 21 more than on January 1st. In fact, business

had so increased that a power generator was put in at Foote's button shop, the power being transmitted by wire.

Telephone activity was now switched to the Easthampton part of the exchange. On Aug. 30, 1883, the *Republican* stated that it was proposed to extend the telephone lines to Loudville and that the Supt. had been looking over the route from the Easthampton village. On September 12th, it was announced that connections were made the day before with Loudville by way of the Glenwood Mills.

The increase in the number of subscribers necessitated additional central office facilities, and in October a new switchboard was placed in position and an additional operator engaged. There were 196 subscribers Oct. 13, 1883, according to the *Republican*, which represents a growth of 59 during a little over eleven months.

This switchboard addition was the last of the telephone events which occurred in the Northampton exchange area during the existence of the Bay State Telephone Co. The proceedings of the Northampton Exchange under the next consolidation, The New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., will be given in Chapter 21.

#### PALMER EXCHANGE

The Massachusetts Telephone Co., to which the Palmer exchange belonged, and the Hampden Telephone Co. conveyed their properties to the Bay State Telephone Co. on Sept. 1, 1882. The Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. was added to the system on September 13th. The new Bay State Telephone Co. created a Springfield Division, and Frank G. Daboll, who had been Manager of the Springfield exchange, was appointed Superintendent, and Mrs. Emma Weeman, who had been in charge of the Palmer Exchange, was now honored with the title of Manager, although, no doubt, she continued to keep a hand in at operating,—or rather hands.

An improved switchboard was installed according to the *Palmer Journal*: "The new switchboard for the telephone office arrived this week and is expected to be in working order within a day or two. It is smaller and more compact than the

old board, although it will accommodate ten more wires, and is quite an ornamental piece of furniture, with several improved features which will facilitate the manipulation of the wires." The switchboard was reported working finely November 25th.

There had been some consideration given by the Bay State Telephone Co. to adding Warren and West Warren to the Palmer Exchange in order to relieve their main line between Springfield and Worcester and possibly put Wilbraham on this 'circuit,' but the *Journal* reported on November 25th that the Company has decided not to bring Warren and West Warren into this exchange, but will connect them with the West Brookfield office, while North Wilbraham goes on to the Springfield exchange."

Rufus Taplin, who had been night operator, gave up his nocturnal duties and was reported to have departed for New York. His sojourn was of short duration, for on March 24th the *Journal* imparted this information: "Rufus Taplin is at his old place in the telephone office for a few days, during the absence of Arthur Merritt, the night operator, on account of sickness. Mr. Taplin goes to Springfield next month, to assist in the central office and work some on the lines."

A spring list of subscribers, including all the exchanges in Western Mass., as well as those in Worcester County, outside the city of Worcester, was issued by the Bay State Telephone Co. The list credited Palmer with 83 subscribers April 27, 1883, only one more than was reported about eight months previously. Worcester was reported elsewhere as belonging to the Boston and Northern Telephone Co.

There now followed several pole line projects which were reported by the *Palmer Journal*, May 11, 1883: "The Telephone Company is setting poles for a new line from Palmer to Stafford, Conn., which will open up telephone communication with Stafford, Rockville, Willimantic and other points in that part of the state heretofore reached only by the way of Hartford. It is expected that the new telephone line to Stafford will bring Norwich and probably New London within telephonic reach of Palmer, while communication with Hartford will be much easier over this line than by the way of Spring-

field, as at present." On July 6th it was reported that the Massachusetts Company had completed the erection of its wire to the State line, and the Connecticut Company will probably finish theirs soon.

Then on September 7th: "At last the telephone line between Palmer, Stafford and points down the New London Northern Railroad is completed."

The *Journal*, on May 25, 1883, printed this item: "The Telephone Company has this week run another wire to Three Rivers, and that village and Thorndike are now on separate wires. A telephone has been placed in the store of J. H. Thayer of Three Rivers."

It was reported July 6th that the telephone wire to Thorndike would soon be extended to Bondsville, and on September 28th this community was enjoying its benefits: "Telephones are in working order at the office of the Boston Duck Co. and Butler Sedgwick's market."

The officials of the Palmer Wire Co., who recently engaged in the manufacture of wire for fence posts, soon started the production of a new product, according to the *Journal*: "The Palmer Wire Co. has just concluded a contract with the National Bell Telephone Co., of Maine, for furnishing them some 1700 miles of telephone wire, a large part of which will go to Minnesota and Texas. It will take about 125 tons of wire to fill the order." The fact that part of this large shipment was to go all the way to Texas and Minnesota reflects the wide range of the Lowell Syndicate's interests. Not only did this syndicate control the National Bell Telephone Co. of Maine; but it also held a majority of the stock in the Erie Telephone Co., which served the whole of Texas, Arkansas and Minnesota, and a portion of Dakota and Ohio.

After receiving this order from the Lowell Syndicate, it was reported that the Palmer Wire Co. was employing 60 men and was running night and day. Another article appeared Oct. 12, 1883, regarding this enterprising company: "The Palmer Wire Co. sends an exhibit of wire to the telephone convention at Cincinnati next week. The company has just completed another large contract for telephone wire, the filling of which will keep the mill running to its fullest capacity all winter."

The new art of illumination was especially well set forth in the *Journal* of Sept. 21, 1883, under its Ware column:

“The George H. Gilbert Manufacturing Co. gave an exhibition of their electric light for the first time on Tuesday evening in their new building. The adjacent streets were brilliantly lighted from the windows. The bridge, the street and the office yard were thronged with those who were eager to see the light, and parties were seen reading the papers in the street, which could be easily done. The gas lights about the village looked dim in comparison. The room in the new building, 223 x 113 feet, is lighted so brilliantly by twelve of the Weston Arc lights that colors could be matched on the sample card with the greatest nicety. The generator is not a large machine, occupying perhaps three by four feet floor space, but is run about 950 revolutions per minute, and requires about 14 horse power to run it. The cost of maintaining the light, after the first cost of the apparatus, is very slight where there is plenty of power to spare. At Gilbertville the company are running 200 Edison incandescent lamps, the generator being run 1500 revolutions per minute, requiring about twenty-five horse power.”

In the summer of 1883, they were working on the new union passenger station at Palmer.

The formation of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. on October 19, 1883, put an end to the Bay State Telephone Co., and the Palmer record under the new company will be continued in Chapter 23.

#### WESTFIELD EXCHANGE

The Bay State Telephone Co. after purchasing the Western Massachusetts Telephone Co., to which the Westfield Exchange belonged, proceeded to make some jurisdictional changes. The Northampton and Westfield offices were transferred from their former Pittsfield management to a newly formed Springfield division, which also included the Springfield, Holyoke and Palmer exchange areas. Charles L. Flint

was retained as manager of the Westfield exchange and reported to the new Division Superintendent, Frank G. Daboll, of Springfield.

A new business rate was to be introduced on Jan. 1, 1883, according to the *Republican*: "Instead of \$40 a year, \$50 will be charged but this will include the right to talk with Springfield without additional cost. Only the telephone subscribers who desire permission to talk freely with Springfield will be charged \$50 a year. To those who prefer to pay by message when calling people in Springfield, or have no desire for added use of the lines, the rate will remain at \$40."

James A. Larkin of Westfield had already laid claim to being the original inventor of a selective signaling system, which enabled the operator to ring a subscriber to the exclusion of the other parties on the line. The next notable invention emanating from Mr. Larkin's work shop was nothing less than a kind of telephone, which received the following mention in the *Times and News-Letter* of Westfield: "Our enterprising townsman, Mr. James A. Larkin, has invented a good many things, among them the acoustic telephone for short distance communication, which he has manufactured and put upon the market with success."

This acoustic telephone was again referred to in the same paper of March 16, 1881: "The fame of the Larkin telephone stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. One bank alone in San Francisco has ordered seven of these instruments."

The height of Mr. Larkin's success, however, came a little later, when he designed a telephone especially adapted for long distance telephoning. The news of this startling development appeared in the *Republican* of Jan. 7, 1883: "J. A. Larkin seems to have struck a big thing in his latest telephone improvement, for the People's Telephone & Telegraph Co. of New York have given him 3,000 shares of their stock and made him one of their vice-presidents for the right of the invention. The shares have a par value of \$100, so our Westfield man has \$300,000 of the \$1,000,000 capital stock. The new telephone is an improvement upon the one some little time ago patented by the People's Company, and differs from the Bell Company's instrument in many features, notably in its sensitiveness and

power to receive and reproduce sound and in being worked by what is known among electricians as an intermittent or 'make and break' current, instead of by the constant current of the Bell instrument. A suit is now pending between the Bell and People's Companies and if the latter win they will at once begin extending their lines all over the country. They already have lines in operation in Jersey City, Trenton and other places in that vicinity."

Up to now the proposed toll line between Pittsfield and Springfield was often approved at Directors' meetings but never seemed to reach the building stage. A round about route was now provided by the completion of a line between Greenfield and Shelburne Falls. This progressive step was announced in the *Republican* of Feb. 20, 1883: "Westfield was connected with Pittsfield by way of Greenfield, Shelburne Falls, Jacksonville, Vermont, and North Adams, a distance of more than 100 miles, last night and conversation between both ends of the line was distinctly heard."

The number of subscribers in the Westfield exchange on March 12, 1883, was nearly 100.

The need for telephone service in the outlying towns was pointed out in this *Republican* item: "The telephone people are talking of extending their lines to Granville if half a dozen subscribers can be secured in that place. There will doubtless be little trouble in getting that number. A telephone line would prove a great advantage and accommodation, saving business men and others many 10-mile drives. If this line is established, probably some place will be designated for a central station where people can use the instruments by paying 15 or 25 cents to talk with Westfield or Springfield."

A surprise was in store for the readers of the April 19, 1883, *Republican*. "Manager Flint of the local telephone exchange is to be succeeded this week by Arthur W. French of Springfield. Mr. Flint, who has given good satisfaction while in town, is to go to Winona, Wisconsin, to assume charge of the Western telephone company's affairs in that place." Horace Greeley's admonition—"Go West, young man!"—proved correct in this case, according to the *Times and News-Letter*: "Charles L. Flint, formerly manager of the Northampton telephone ex-

change and later of the Westfield exchange, who went West a few months ago, has recently been promoted to the management of the large exchange in Minneapolis, Minn., which employs fifteen operators.”

The following incident is taken from the *Times and News-Letter*: “It is thought that the ladle used in dipping ice cream for a customer on one of our streets the other day, will behave itself after this, for the dispenser of the delicacy was seen to give it a good ‘licking.’ ”

The Pittsfield-Springfield toll line project, which according to earlier plans was to proceed via Dalton, Windsor, Cummington and Williamsburg was finally revived, but the present management favored the old stage route through Lee, Becket and Chester. The *Republican* announced the beginning of the work, June 12, 1883: “Work was begun yesterday on the telephone line to be run from Westfield to Pittsfield by a considerable force of men. This will give Southern Berkshire connection with the middle and eastern parts of the state without having to send the message around by way of Vermont as is now the case.”

On August 15th it was reported that the Telephone Company had their poles set as far as Chester, in the Western extension.

An item appeared in the *Republican* of August 30th, just prior to the completion of the project: “Now that the telephone line has been run through from Pittsfield to Westfield the latter place will be made the central station for Chester and Huntington, as it is now for Russell and Southwick. The opening of through business from Berkshire to Springfield will be likely to prove considerable of an annoyance to Westfield people who talk much with Springfield, as they will have to wait their turn instead of having a line for themselves as for the past year or two. The telephone people promise, however, that if the arrangement is unsatisfactory to local patrons an extra line will be put up between Springfield and Westfield.” The next day, proof of the line’s clarity was cited: “The striking of a clock in Chester was distinctly heard in Springfield yesterday through the telephone.” The completion of



this important toll link was announced in the *Republican* of Oct. 3, 1883.

The publishers of the *Times and News-Letter* appeared to be of a scrupulous and outspoken turn, and the telephone people were not alone in receiving jibes from their literary pens. Manager A. W. French had evidently been transferred rather abruptly, after serving as the Westfield Manager only four months. This circumstance elicited the following genial remarks Aug. 29, 1883: "Mr. F. G. Messenger is the new telephone manager in this town, in the place of the one who took 'French leave' the other night. We trust Mr. M. is the right man in the right place, and that he has come to stay. We have had boy's play long enough."

The *Times and News-Letter* was published every Wednesday afternoon by L. N. Clark and C. C. Story. The price was \$1.50 per year, and \$2.00, if delivered by carrier. It was a consolidation of two newspapers on July 3, 1874,—The Westfield News Letter established Feb. 18, 1841, and the Western Hampden Times, established March 17, 1811. It consisted of four large pages, and the papers issued in the early 1880's are still in excellent condition, due to the high grade rag paper used then. The papers were interspersed with humorous stories and quaint observations, there being no pictures, cartoons or "funnies" to amuse the readers.

Two medicinal remedies, which were prominently advertised in this Westfield paper, seemed also to have a beneficial effect on the telephone's system. Ayers Sarsaparilla, for rheumatism etc., and Ayers Cherry Pectoral, for throat and lungs, were made by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass., and it was Frederick Ayer, of this firm, who invested his medicinal profits in the telephone system and was elected a director of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., when it was organized.

Reference to telephone matters seemed to get scantier as time went on. On Sept. 19, 1883, this item appeared in the *Times and News-Letter*: "Anson B. Norton, telephone operator, will be one of the contestants in the bicycle races at Blandford on Friday." This event occurred at the fair grounds, where the fair and cattle show held forth three days each

September, with prizes galore and dinners which were spoken of in glowing terms by the same paper.

The last important improvement made under the regime of the Bay State Telephone Co. was a new switchboard, arranged for 50 wires instead of the former 25. Several improvements were incorporated which enabled the operator to attend to several calls almost at the same moment and which allowed conversation over a long length of line to be much more distinctly heard.

The *Times and News-Letter* speaks of the switchboard in this quaint fashion: "The telephone exchange has a new and improved switchboard by means of which all creation and the 'rest of mankind' can talk at once. In other words, it is a regular 'sewing circle.' "

The Bay State Telephone Co., after conducting its affairs successfully for about a year, notably the expansion of toll lines, joined with other companies in forming the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. Westfield's telephone affairs under this new Company will appear in Chapter 24.

## CHAPTER 12

### *Bay State Telephone Company Pittsfield - North Adams - Adams - Great Barrington - Greenfield Exchanges*

#### PITTSFIELD EXCHANGE

THE Western Massachusetts Telephone Co., with headquarters at Pittsfield, transferred its property and leases of every kind to Joel C. Clark of South Framingham, who represented the Bay State Telephone Co. This important transaction took place Sept. 13, 1882. The Bay State Telephone Company partitioned its far flung territory into divisions; the Western division, with headquarters at Pittsfield, comprising the Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams exchanges and the undeveloped areas, telephonically speaking, of Great Barrington and Greenfield. Joel C. Clark was appointed General Manager of this division, and Charles A. Raymond was continued as Manager of the Pittsfield Exchange.

A new idea of rate making received mention in the *Republican* of Sept. 13, 1882: "General Manager Clark, of the telephone company, is arranging a new schedule of rates all over the territory covered by his contract, basing them on the distance from the central office, the number of instruments used and other details, which will make a reduction in some cases."

It is not known whether this study resulted in the schedule of rates announced in the same paper a few days later: "The

new telephone rates in Berkshire will be \$10.75 a quarter for business places and \$8.25 for residences, with a discount for prompt payment."

Martin A. Goodwin spent 8 years in Pittsfield, starting about Nov., 1882, according to a later Topics: "He built the first line from Lee to Housatonic and also ran the first line to Stockbridge. He began in Fall River in 1879, and spent about two years in that section of the state. He installed the first telephone in New Bedford, at the "City Yard," and also made the first changeable connection for the line over the drawbridge, just out of New Bedford. After a short period in Boston, with the Bay State Telephone Co., Mr. Goodwin went to Pittsfield."

Charles A. Raymond, who had been in charge of the Pittsfield exchange for two years, resigned his position the first of November to go into the Third National Bank as a clerk, which position he held before joining the telephone company.

George C. Millard, the founder and manager of the North Adams exchange, was transferred to the county seat to take Mr. Raymond's place.

There appeared to be quite a brisk demand for telephones, according to the *Republican*: "The telephone company obtained 10 new subscribers in Lee this week and some in Lenox. They will be connected with the Pittsfield exchange." On December 8th it was reported that 35 instruments were added in Berkshire County during November and that the message receipts exceeded last month's by \$50.

Joel C. Clark seems to have departed from Pittsfield, the following *Transcript* item of Nov. 16, 1882, referring approvingly to his successor: "J. B. Gardner, the new Western Massachusetts Manager of the Telephone Company, is making many improvements and helping the business noticeably."

George H. Bliss, the inventor and head of the Bliss Telephone Signal Co., having been relieved of his responsibilities as President of the Western Mass. Telephone Co., now had more time to devote to his inventions: "George H. Bliss is spending the winter in Boston, where he is introducing his telephone signal. He is also experimenting with an attachment for long distance speaking, which works well between

Boston and Providence, and he is working on a special switchboard."

An urge to advance the toll line program now possessed the telephone management. On Jan. 20, 1883, this Pittsfield news was printed in the *Republican*: "Distinct conversation by telephone between Pittsfield and Greenfield by way of North Adams and Jacksonville, Vermont, was carried on the other day. When the line is finished to Springfield communication to Pittsfield will be experimented with that way. The company's experience with trunk lines as a source of profit is quite encouraging because it requires no more operatives, and the line between Berkshire and Springfield direct will, no doubt, be built in the spring."

Another item about the plans for pole lines appeared in the *Republican* of Feb. 5, 1883: "The telephone company expect to put up 300 miles of wire in Berkshire in the spring, and the smaller towns like Tyringham, Hancock, Lanesboro and some in Southern Berkshire, through which a trunk line is to be built, are each to be given a station or small exchange. The line to Springfield from Pittsfield is to be begun as soon as possible and connection from Pittsfield to Albany by way of New Lebanon is talked of."

J. B. Gardner remained only a few months as General Manager of the Western Division, leaving Pittsfield Feb. 5, 1883, to take a position in New York as an expert electrician. George C. Millard, Manager of the Pittsfield exchange, took Mr. Gardner's place.

Dennis McCarty, telephone repairer, and Joseph Wood, telephone clerk, were employees of the Company at Pittsfield.

Improvements to telephone switchboards were pointed out March 13, 1883: "The telephone company have put into the Pittsfield Central office two new switchboards, with spring jacks and Deland plugs, which will reduce the time of making calls nearly one-half. The work of changing all the wires was done in one night."

The *Republican* of March 23, 1883, related that a central office had been established in Lee: "The Lee telephone exchange has now 32 subscribers, which include Stockbridge and Glendale, with an office in G. H. Heath's store and night and

day service. It is to be extended to Housatonic and Great Barrington, with an exchange in the latter town, about the middle of April. From there Egremont, Monterey and New Marlboro will be reached. The tariff between Pittsfield and Great Barrington will be about 20 cents. The Western division, which is Berkshire, has added since last November 116 telephones, 7 being acquired by the purchase of the Jacksonville line, and 32 have been put in this month; a separate wire also run from Pittsfield to Lee via Lenox and Lenox Furnace."

The fact that there was no mention of a tariff between the Pittsfield and Lee exchanges is an indication that the Lee exchange was a branch system, which, upon payment of the Pittsfield rates, entitled their subscribers to free calls to Pittsfield.

Dalton was reported April 19, 1883, as having 18 telephones.

At last, a direct toll line between Pittsfield and Springfield was started, although taking a different route than first planned, which was recorded in the July 7, 1883, *Republican*: "The telephone company which will connect Springfield with Pittsfield passing through Lee as the nearest route (the old stage route by the way of Chester and Becket) began work there last week working east. Work has been going on from this end for some time." A later report, issued August 29th, stated that the telephone company was pushing their work and expected to connect Berkshire County with Westfield and Springfield in a few weeks.

The Pittsfield-Springfield toll line was completed towards the end of September, 1883, and obviated the necessity of being routed through Jacksonville, Vermont; Shelburne Falls, and Greenfield to reach Springfield.

The Pittsfield-Albany line via New Lebanon was spoken of as completed by the *Adams Transcript* of October 4th.

The *Republican* refers to the telephone treatment rendered Southern Berkshire: "The Pittsfield telephone exchange will probably remain under the same management after the consolidation of companies. It is to be hoped that they will give the people better service in the Southern parts of the county. It is now impossible to communicate with the Southern towns on Sunday except for a few hours in the day."

A continuation of the telephone progress in the Pittsfield Exchange area, under the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., will be found in Chapter 15.

#### NORTH ADAMS EXCHANGE

Following the sale of the Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. to the Bay State Telephone Co. on Sept. 13, 1882, the North Adams exchange came under the watchful eye of Joel C. Clark of South Framingham. Mr. Clark was made Manager of the newly created Western division, with headquarters at Pittsfield, which comprised the exchanges of Pittsfield, Lee, North Adams, and Adams. George C. Millard, who had started the North Adams exchange, with the assistance of William F. Orr, was continued in his position as Manager.

The new telephone rates, which the management put into effect in Berkshire, seemed to please the North Adams subscribers; the *Adams Transcript* mentioning that the rates were very satisfactory and old subscribers were returning and new ones were constantly coming in. The rates were \$10.75 a quarter for business places and \$8.25 a quarter for residences, with discounts for prompt payment. A new feature was the sale of a \$12.50 due bill in telephone messages for \$10.00.

A fortuitous event occurred at this time, although North Adams was not to receive the benefit of it until a little later. It was reported by the *Adams Transcript* of Oct. 12, 1882: "W. H. Stedman of this town has received the appointment of inspector of the Worcester telephone exchange. It has 800 telephones and is owned by the Boston and Northern Telephone Co., one of the largest telephone companies in the country."

An important item appeared in the *Republican* of Nov. 13, 1882: "George C. Millard, Manager of the North Adams telephone exchange since its establishment, has been appointed Manager of the Pittsfield exchange." Charles A. Raymond, for two years in charge of the Pittsfield exchange, had resigned to resume his financial career with the Third National Bank of Pittsfield.

The new manager selected to take Mr. Millard's place was

the aforementioned William H. Stedman. Mr. Stedman came from Newfane, Vermont, to North Adams in 1872 and entered the jewelry business. He was mechanically gifted and of an inventive mind. His first telephone work had been a contract made with the Western Mass. Telephone Co. to rewind coils and repair bells, which usually suffered somewhat from electric storms. He also built several switchboards for this company, all of which gave good satisfaction.

It was said that while in Worcester inspecting telephones he received a telegram from General Manager Downs of the Bay State Telephone Co.: "Go to North Adams on the next train, take charge of the exchange and build it up from the roots to the limbs."

In 1882, two operators were employed, and according to a later *Telephone Topics*, "all that was required of the manager then was to set poles, string wires, put in telephones, keep the books, make out and collect bills, and do the inspecting and repairing, and operate for the operators if they wanted to take a few hours off."

A plant project of benefit to this community was spoken of in the *Adams Transcript* of November 16th: "The work of extending telephone lines from Shelburne Falls to Greenfield is nearly completed." North Adams was, of course, connected with the Jacksonville, Vermont, Exchange, and, at that point, with the North River Telephone Co.'s line, which extended from Jacksonville to Shelburne Falls. As soon as this Shelburne Falls-Greenfield project was completed, there would be a through line from the Berkshires to Greenfield and other points east.

"J. B. Gardner, who succeeded Joel C. Clark as Manager of the Western Division, was reported as making many improvements and helping the business noticeably: "The North Adams office will have three switchboards and operators, instead of two, shortly. Telephones have been placed in Dr. Millard's drug store, S. B. Dibble's house, W. H. Stedman's house, and in the Freeman office at Adams. Burlingane and Darbys and C. H. Cutting have private wires."

An ambitious toll line project was described in the *Transcript* of Nov. 23, 1882: "The Boston and Northern Telephone



Co. is building a trunk line between Boston and North Adams, and before a great while North Adams people can communicate with Bostonians by telephone. The trunk line will take in Greenfield, Fitchburg and other places. It is also expected that the company will build a line to Hoosick Falls and then to Northern New York."

North Adams seemed to be the center of considerable telephone activity. On December 9th the *Transcript* carried this news: "The Bay State Telephone Co. have bought out the Jacksonville and North Adams Telephone Co. for \$20 a share. Elmer J. Bullock continues as President, W. H. Stedman of North Adams is Supt. A young North Adams man bought a large amount of the stock some time ago and made \$200 on its sale."

The North River Telephone Co. was also sold to the Bay State Telephone Co., according to the December 14th *Transcript*, thus giving the latter company the ownership of the telephone line from North Adams to Shelburne Falls, which it was extending to Greenfield.

The Adams *Transcript*, in whose building on Bank Street, North Adams, the telephone company conducted its growing business, surprised its readers on December 21 by issuing a larger newspaper—at no extra cost.

On Jan. 11, 1883, this newspaper reported the telephone census: "There are 128 telephones in use in North Adams against 90 a few months ago. There were 13 new ones put in at Pittsfield and neighboring towns last month and 9 in North Adams alone."

"The telephone wires are completed to Greenfield,"—thus announced the *Transcript* of Jan. 25, 1883,—“and now North Adams people can talk with Greenfield, Springfield, Gardner, Shelburne Falls, Westfield and even with Fitchburg and Worcester. Manager Stedman talked with men in all these places in one day lately, to test the service."

The telephone line in Williamstown was extended to Sweet's Corners in February, and a public station was installed at the home of D. J. Sweet, Postmaster of the village, which accommodated a long-felt necessity in and around Sweet's Corners—according to the *Transcript*.

The following incident may have occurred in Williamstown: College Professor to student: "This is the fifth time in the last two years you have been granted leave of absence to attend your grandfather's funeral!"

"I know," deprecatingly admitted the graceless young scamp, "but it isn't my fault, is it, if my grandmother will marry again?"

Mr. Gardner, Manager of the Western Division, left Pittsfield Feb. 5, 1883, and George C. Millard, formerly of North Adams and then Manager of the Pittsfield exchange, took his place.

A note in the *Republican* of Feb. 26, 1883, set forth the assurance that North Adams would be connected with Bennington by telephone in the spring. However, as was so often the case, the telephone officials' wish was 'father to the thought,' and it wasn't until about two years later that this looked-for event occurred.

A broader telephone service was mentioned May 17th by the *Transcript*: "The telephone office has commenced doing a message business, and now subscribers can have messages sent to non-subscribers."

The telephone people kept in mind artistic effects when engaging in construction work. "The telephone company will build a tower on the Bank building to allow a more compact and graceful entrance for the telephone wires to their office."

The *Republican*, a little later, announced that this tower was nearly completed, and that the town then had over 150 stations. General Manager Downs had just sent instructions to extend the line to Troy immediately.

The Bay State Telephone Co. managed to complete another important toll line, according to the *Transcript* of Oct. 4, 1883: "The North Adams exchange is now in connection with Albany via Pittsfield. Doubtful if line will be built to Troy this winter." The failure to proceed with the Troy line, as directed by General Manager Downs, can only be explained by a decision to let the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., whose organization was about consummated, perform the pleasant task of building the line over the Taconic Range.

The final combination of New England telephone companies occurred Oct. 19, 1883, and further information about the telephone affairs of North Adams, under the management of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., will be found in Chapter 16.

#### ADAMS EXCHANGE

The telephone exchange in Adams, being a branch office of the North Adams exchange, was not accorded frequent mention by the newspapers. Many of the things that were reported in connection with the North Adams exchange applied to the Adams branch office as well. It has been mentioned that North Adams, a few years before, comprised a part of the town of Adams.

Prior to the sale of the Western Mass. Telephone Co. to the Bay State Telephone Co., the telephone manager of the Adams exchange was Edmund G. Flint. It is presumed that Mr. Flint continued in this position after Joel C. Clark was appointed Manager of the new Western division, with headquarters at Pittsfield. The new company created, among others, a Worcester division, a Springfield division and a Western division. This latter division, at its beginning, had only three exchanges—Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams.

Telephones were put in the Freeman office; L. J. Follett's residence and a telephone line was run from T. A. Mole's house to his farm. Also, according to the *Transcript* of June 14, 1883: "Telephones have been put into Dr. Riley's office, Dr. Holmes' office and F. H. Burt's house. There are now 67 telephones in town, an increase of 15 since January 1st."

It appears from the following *Transcript* excerpt of August 30th that Edmund Flint was no longer the telephone manager here: "Manager Taylor has added 10 telephones to the local exchange, which now numbers 70 instruments."

The consolidation of the Bay State Telephone Co. and several other companies brought about the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co.

The Adams Exchange, with several others, was made a part of the North Adams Exchange Area. It thus becomes necessary

to include the affairs of the Adams Exchange with those of North Adams, which will be found in Chapter 16.

#### GREAT BARRINGTON EXCHANGE

The Western Massachusetts Telephone Co. did not fulfill its hopes of installing a telephone exchange in Great Barrington. Nevertheless, the town was not entirely without the benefits of telephone service. According to the *History of Great Barrington*, by Charles J. Taylor, and published by the town in 1928: "Private enterprise installed the first telephone line in 1879 between the Berkshire Woolen Mills and the residences of Parley A. Russell and George E. Russell. The circuit also included Lillie's (now Harper's) drug store and the residence of George A. Tuller."

The *Berkshire Courier*, a weekly newspaper published by Clark W. Bryan and James A. Bryan, states in its June 30, 1880, issue: "Work on the new telephone line between Great Barrington and South Egremont is to be commenced at once, and when constructed it will be utilized by the South Egremont and Great Barrington Telephone Club, of which W. E. Phelps of South Egremont is Secretary and Treasurer, and W. B. Peck and W. C. Dalzell of South Egremont, and F. H. Wright and J. Fred Whiting of Great Barrington, are the Committee to look after the construction of the line, which will be worked under the sanction of and in connection with the Western Massachusetts Telephone Co.

"The Central office (meaning here a business place where the proprietor sends out for parties or delivers messages) in Great Barrington will be at Whiting's Drug Store, and at South Egremont at the post office, with instruments at the Mount Everett House, Dalzell's carriage works, and at some private residences."

The *Courier* of July 21, 1880, reported: "The new line of telephone is now open for business. Rates for transmission of messages from Great Barrington to South Egremont, 10 cents; from South Egremont to Great Barrington, including delivery, 15 cents."

The Bay State Telephone Co. took over the Western Massa-

chusetts Telephone Co. September 13, 1882. A Western Division was organized, with headquarters at Pittsfield, the General Manager being Joel C. Clark.

In the spring of 1883 this new Company turned its attention to lower Berkshire. The March 7th *Courier* told of a line that was to be extended from the Lee exchange to Stockbridge, thence to Glendale, where there has never been a telegraphic line. Among the subscribers in Glendale will be Chaffee and Callender paper mill and the F. W. Adams woolen mills. Two weeks later telephones were being put into several places in Stockbridge.

May 23, 1883, the *Courier* published an article well calculated to charm the readers' eyes: "The Bay State Telephone Co. now have their line all completed to Great Barrington and their connections nearly all made. They have met with a better reception, in regard to new subscribers, than they expected, and when they have connected on with the Egremont line, as is intended, and also the private line here, the instruments in use will number 30. The exchange has been established in rooms in the Sumner Building, and an attendant will be stationed there day and night, which will enable the subscribers to be waited on promptly at all times. The work done by this company hereabouts, is first class, the structure being especially well built, and, in fact, everything pertaining to the business has been done in a first class manner. C. G. Thomkins, who is the General Manager for Berkshire County, has had the general supervision and has been ably seconded by Mr. Melvin Hutchins, the Superintendent of Construction. The lines now work in 1st class shape with all the points of connection to the north, the tests being of the most satisfactory kind. The town has been divided into 24 circuits with two to four subscribers on each circuit, a list of same being given below."

Number 1.—Dr. Large, office and residence; John Brewer & Sons', lumber yard; G. A. Tuller, Collins House.

Number 4.—Dr. F. P. Whittlesey, office; S. A. Sanford, market.

Number 5.—Western Union Telegraph office.

Number 6.—Houghtaling & Pomeroy's store, Monument Mills, C. R. Crane, office and house, all of Housatonic.

Number 8.—Berkshire Woolen Company; George E. Russell, residence; Parley A. Russell, residence.

Number 9.—F. T. Whiting & Son, store; Dr. W. P. Small, office & residence.

Number 10.—J. A. Brewer, store; E. D. Humphrey, store.

Number 12.—C. H. Lillie, store; Dr. Samuel Camp, office.

Number 13.—Peck & Harrington, store; Mt. Everett House, Dalzell & Co., and A. A. Benjamin, all of South Egremont.

Number 15.—Miller House; Berkshire Courier Office and Clark W. & J. A. Bryan.

Number 16.—C. J. Burget, store.

Number 17.—E. D. Brainard, residence.

Number 21.—M. D. Richardson, house.

Number 23.—H. T. Robbins, house.

Number 24.—R. I. Taylor, store; C. H. Eddy, store; A. S. Fassett, store.

Melvin Hutchins, the Superintendent of Construction, started his picturesque career in 1869 building telegraph lines. "On October 9, 1882, (he later related) I entered the employ of the Boston and Northern Telephone Co. as a line foreman. I was transferred to Pittsfield early in 1883 and built the Pittsfield-Great Barrington line and opened the first exchange in Great Barrington. In those days, we did everything in connection with installing an exchange, setting the switchboard and soliciting subscribers. I stayed in Great Barrington until December, 1884, when I came to Springfield."

The next item, May 30, 1883, indicates that the Great Barrington exchange was opened soon after May 23rd: Miss Callie Gallup is now one of the operators of the Telephone Exchange in this village, assisting young Mr. Knapp, who has been in charge of the exchange since its establishment.

The new exchange met with a favorable reception, and four new business customers were made known: Egbert Hollister, store; Dr. W. P. Atherton, house; C. W. Norton, store, and H. J. Mignerey, store.

The *Courier* of June 20, 1883, contained an optimistic

article: "Poles for a new line were set between North Egremont and John A. Cone's farm, which after reaching Cone's Corner, will come into town on Telephone Company poles and be put on the exchange. The line is being built by E. K. Corthell, the engineer-in-chief of Buffalo & West Shore railroad, who spends his summer vacations in North Egremont. It is expected that a branch line will be built to Alford, out past the Elisha Tobey place, where Dr. Richard Beebe will build a line from his house to meet it. The Messrs. Dalzell & Co., intend to run a line from South Egremont to Hillsdale, N.Y., which will there meet a line that is now being built from Hudson, N.Y., and will probably, in time, come into our exchange, furnishing great accommodation."

The last construction work performed in South Berkshire by the Bay State Telephone Co. was the setting of poles and stringing the wire from Great Barrington to Sheffield, which was reported working splendidly July 25, 1883.

The Lee office, at this time, was a branch of the Pittsfield exchange.

The population of Great Barrington in 1880 was 4653: the Village itself being 2341; Housatonic Village, 1112; Van Deusenville, 146; and the rural areas, 1054.

In 1842 the coming to the town of the Housatonic railroad effected a great change in the business of the village. The Housatonic system included only the line from Bridgeport to Pittsfield, 111 miles long. In 1892 it was merged in the N Y, N H, & H.

Housatonic is a manufacturing center. The Monument Mills, incorporated in 1850, and absorbing the Waubeek Mill in 1871, have for many years been the most important manufacturing industry of the whole town. Beginning with the production of cotton warps, they have become noted for the Manufacture of Marseilles counterpanes. This Company bought the Glendale Woolen Mill property and erected the second largest power plant on the river, according to C. J. Taylor's history.

Second to the Monument Mills in importance are the paper mills. B. D. Rising Co. acquired the property of the Owen Paper Co. in 1900.

Two recreational items are taken from the *Courier*: A large party from the Mt. Everett House, South Egremont, indulged in a hay ride to Gibson's Grove at Lake Buel. Four horses drew the merry party, who remembered the *Courier* office with a good old-fashioned cheer, as they went through this village.

The Housatonic Railroad will begin to run excursion trains to Coney Island and Rockaway about the 15th of June.

The *Courier* also reported that the Williams Academy, Stockbridge High School, has a full quota of pupils this term, numbering 56.

The *Berkshire Courier* was founded by John D. Cushing of Lenox, who issued the first number on the 16th of October, 1834. Mr. Rogers purchased his interest in 1865 and sold to Clark W. Bryan January 1, 1879. Mr. Bryan was formerly with the *Springfield Republican*.

The Bay State Telephone Co. ended its career October 19, 1883, when it became a part of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company. A continuation of the events occurring in South Berkshire will be found in Chapter 17.

#### GREENFIELD EXCHANGE

The Western Massachusetts Telephone Co., which had started to organize an exchange at Greenfield, was taken over by the Bay State Telephone Co. before that auspicious event occurred. Soon the Bay State Telephone Co. divided its large territory into divisions, and appointed Joel C. Clark of South Framingham, the Manager of the Western division, with headquarters at Pittsfield. This division included the Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams exchanges and several prospective exchanges, of which Greenfield was one.

There appeared to be a more confident tone, however, in the article appearing in the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* of Oct. 9, 1882: "H. R. Miller, of the Western Telephone Co. (Western division), has come to town for the purpose of establishing a telephone exchange which will be connected with Shelburne Falls and possibly other places in this vicinity. Greenfield is a little late in introducing the telephone on



account of the former division of territory between the companies. The recent consolidation makes it feasible to take in Greenfield with other places, and we dare say the telephone will be found to be as much of a necessity here as elsewhere.

Mr. Miller's appearance in town was for the purpose of canvassing for subscribers. He succeeded in procuring 25 signatures, which were 5 short of the goal. Another stimulating article appeared October 23rd in the *Gazette and Courier*: "The Bay State Telephone Co. has a large amount of work to do before cold weather but Greenfield has waited so long that it is felt it ought to have an exchange this season, and if a sufficient number of patrons can be obtained during the coming week a large force will be put on and this place will be connected by local lines with Shelburne Falls, Turners Falls, Millers Falls and Deerfield, and the trunk line extended from Northampton on the south and from Orange on the east, placing us in connection with Northampton, Holyoke and Springfield, and Orange, Athol, Gardner, Fitchburg and Worcester and points east at once. If it can be done before cold weather, Brattleboro will be reached, which will give a connection with Bellows Falls, Hinsdale, Winchester and Keene. If an exchange is opened here, no pains or expense will be spared to make the system indispensable to the business interests of the place."

The preceding article produced the desired effect, for an item in the Nov. 3, 1882, *Republican* gave this news: "Agent Burt of the Bay State Telephone Co. has engaged poles for a line from Shelburne Falls to Orange, the central exchange being located at Greenfield."

This item was followed by one in the Greenfield paper of November 13th, stating that the above work was being rapidly pushed, and that the office of the company will be on the fourth floor of the Pond Block. (Later called the Burnham Block.) The hope was expressed that the wires would be extended wherever necessary in the center of the village without the use of unsightly poles. No suggestion was made that the poles be painted, as they were in some places.

A pole line to the south was also the aim of the management—weather permitting. This undertaking was made known by

the *Republican* on November 21st: "There is some prospect that Greenfield may be connected with Springfield by telephone during the winter by way of Northampton, as poles have already been bought for part of the route, and the work is to be pushed as rapidly as possible."

A report on the East-West pole line job was given in the December 4th *Gazette and Courier*: "The poles are up for the telephone wires between Greenfield and Shelburne Falls, the connection East has been made, with the exception of a short space between here and Montague City."

The *Republican* on December 14th reported that men began today to string the telephone line from Greenfield to Hatfield, which will connect Greenfield and Springfield by telephone.

The telephone line to Northampton was completed Jan. 2, 1883, according to the *Republican*, and instruments were being put in the offices of subscribers. "Within a week the exchange will be in full operation. A 50-wire switchboard has been put into the office in the Pond Block, and it will start off with 50 or more subscribers."

The following article of Jan. 17, 1883, in the *Republican*, leaves no doubt that the central office was finally working: "Telephone connections were made yesterday with Vermont by way of Shelburne Falls. Connections are now made in all directions except Turners Falls, which will be connected in a few days. A woman operator now manages the switchboard at the exchange. Nearly 40 instruments have already been put in the village and more will be placed in operation this week."

An article in the *Gazette and Courier* of January 22 (published weekly) contained other points of interest and gave a list of the 43 first subscribers:

Allen, S. Sons, hardware	Reed, C. N., grocer
Am. House, D. S. Simonds	Sheldon & Newcomb, h'dw
Bruce Bros., depot rest'nt	Stratton, T. B., (M. Falls) gro-
Court House	cer
Crosby, D. W., bakery	Tilton & Co., books & station-
Deane, Dr. A. C., office	ery
Drew, J. V., bakery	Troy & G'f'd fr'ght depot

Express, U.S.C., office	Williams, Dr. F. W., dentist
Express, E. & N. E., office	Williams, G. D., Atty. at law
First Nat. Bank	Washburn, Wm. B., house
Gazette & Courier office	Wiley, S. L., house
G'd Reformer, office	W. U. Telegraph office
Howland & Lowell, d'g'sts	Wiley & Russell Mfg. Co.
Hull, A. N., coal yard	Walker, Dr. A. C., office
Hull, A. N., office	Wells Bros. Mfg. Co.
Kent, S., stable	Co-operative Mfg. Co.
Keith, Chas., grocer	Day, Chas. J., office
Luey, L. L. & Son, grocers	Rogers, Geo., house
Lamb, J. E., grain	Watson, H. D., house
Miller, H. L., market	Russell C. P., house
Payne, C. N., druggist	Seaman, W. H., office
Pond, F. A., clothing store	Fisk, Dr. C. L., Jr., office
Renth, S., cigar manf't'er	

The first telephone Manager was F. E. Bowker, who took up telephone work in 1882. He was first engaged as a member of a construction crew which connected several isolated exchanges by means of a light pole line and a no. 10 iron grounded circuit extending from Orange to Worcester through Gardner. Early in the year 1883, he was transferred to Greenfield, where he assisted in completing the installation of the first exchange and became its first manager.

Charles A. Jones was listed in the Business Directory as the telephone operator. The location of Pond Block was given as Main Street, opposite Court Square. It was later referred to as the Burnham Block.

An aftermath of this historic event was reported by the *Gazette and Courier*: "Dwellers in buildings to which telephone wires are attached have to get used to the strange sounds produced. One man got up three or four times the other night because he thought the house was on fire. He could hear, as he supposed, the roaring and cracking of the flames, but after repeated search concluded that the telephone wires disturbed by the high wind were the cause of his alarm."

Joel C. Clark had been arranging a new schedule of rates, basing them on the distance from the central office, the num-

ber of instruments used and other details, which would make a reduction in some cases. The part pertaining to the number of instruments is elucidated in the *Republican*: "Arrangements will be made so that those who have telephones at their houses as well as at their places of business will have a reduction from the usual rates."

The Greenfield telephone exchange was reported as having 43 subscribers Jan. 22, 1883, and telephone connection was made two days later with Turners Falls, which contributed to the increase of subscribers to fifty. Little had been done in the way of canvassing in the outer districts, as it had taken a great deal of work to get the through lines completed. News items regarding telephone activities in these outer districts now began to appear.

The local paper reported on Jan. 29th that the Millers Falls Co. have a telephone in their office, and there is one for public use in T. B. Stratton's store. Also that the telephone works to the great satisfaction of the patrons, and added, "Some one at the middle town of Shelburne says Dr. Duncan should put in an instrument. It might be of much use to the doctor, as well as his neighbors and patients." An extra telephone wire for local business was put on between Shelburne Falls and Coleraine.

The *Gazette and Courier* of Feb. 12, 1883, reported that the telephone for public use in Tilton & Company's book store, Turners Falls, was being used a good deal and that the Farren House is soon to be connected with the telephone exchange. C. Arthur Peck, druggist, also of Turners Falls, was anxiously waiting to have a telephone put in his store.

A spirited item in the *Gazette* is quoted: "A Greenfield man joined a sleighing party to a neighboring town the other day and had such a good time that he drove home with another man's horse."

The March 12, 1883, *Republican* reported that the headquarters of the Supt. of the Boston & Northern Telephone Co., J. B. Hunt, were transferred from Bellows Falls to the Greenfield Exchange office.

An important toll line project was mentioned in the *Republican* of April 25th: "The Bay State Telephone Co. is ex-

tending its line north from Greenfield through Bernardston to Brattleboro." A week later it was announced that the company would run their lines to Brattleboro via South Vernon instead of North Bernardston, as at first contemplated, and that the poles were set up to Bernardston.

Montague was mentioned by the *Gazette* of June 18th: "The public telephone is open for business at the post office. Mr. Nims has a private one at his mill."

Heath was signaled by an event reported in the *Republican* of June 19th: "Postmaster Bolton gives Heath its first telephone, running a line from his store 20 rods to his mother's residence."

Ashfield was on the point of emerging from its isolated condition. The *Republican* of June 26th stated that the telephone line to Ashfield had been completed to Buckland, and that the office (telephone for public use) is to be at Bradford's store. The *Gazette* followed up on July 2nd with the information that the wire was now on the poles in Ashfield, and that it ought to be in working order very soon.

The telephone business must have been quite satisfactory to warrant the following action, reported in the *Republican* of June 22nd: "The telephone exchange will be open hereafter from 9 to 10 Sunday morning and 4 to 6 in the afternoon." It wasn't until January 6, 1884, that the telephone exchange was kept open all day Sunday.

Private lines were occasionally installed. E. Lester, of Millers Falls, had one which connected the post office with his house.

Northfield was finally provided with the benefits of telephone communication. The *Gazette and Courier* of October 1st thus described it: "'No telephone communicates' is no longer true of Northfield. The line was completed and the 'hullo machines' placed in operation last Wednesday. At present the only instrument is in the post-office, but there is probability of others being put in."

Whately celebrated the introduction of two telephones within its confines sometime in early October, 1883. An instrument was put in the store of Eugene E. Wood, near

Whately depot, for the use of the public, and one for the accommodation of Bartlett Bros., the building contractor.

At the time of the foregoing events, Greenfield was a peaceful country town, having a population in 1880 of 3903. The town of Montague, which includes Turners Falls and Millers Falls, was the largest town in Franklin County, with 4875 inhabitants. Shelburne and Northfield were about 1600 each, Colrain and Conway about 1780, Bernardston 934 and Charlmont 932.

Railroads received their share of attention in the *Gazette and Courier*. There were several short lines which, connected together, made the "Tunnel Road" from Boston to Troy. The Troy and Greenfield Railroad Company, the Fitchburg Railroad Company, the Troy and Boston Railroad Company and the Boston, Hoosac Tunnel and Western Railroad Company all had a "finger in the pie," so to speak. The completion of the Hoosac Tunnel in 1876 proved quite a stimulus to these roads.

The Connecticut River Railroad, now the Boston & Maine, served Greenfield from the south, and the Vermont and Mass. Railroad had trackage, 52 miles of which were double tracked.

By taking a short ride or walk to Cheapside one could board a train South on the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, which had built an extension from Northampton to Turners Falls and one to Bardwell's Ferry, where it connected with the "Tunnel" route.

There were a few manufacturing concerns in and about Greenfield, and the financial interests were quick to organize an electric company. The following is taken from the *Gazette and Courier* of March 1, 1880: "The Greenfield Power Co. will meet to perfect their organization Thursday evening. The capital will be \$8,000, and the shares will be \$100 each. Nearly if not quite all the stock is taken. The company have received a letter from a New York man enquiring as to the encouragement he can get to locate a button factory in Greenfield." Eight days later, the button company had begun a steam-power building 125 feet long and two stories high in the old agricultural lot.

Some of the manufacturing concerns were—Greenfield

Tool Co.; Spurr Mf'g. Co.; Stratton Bros., levels; Millers Falls Co., in Millers Falls; Montague Paper Co., and in Turners Falls—The Keith Paper Co.; John Russell Cutlery Co.; The Clark Machine Co., pumps; and the Turners Falls Water Power Co.

The graduating exercises of the class of 1883, Greenfield High School, in Washington Hall, honored the ten members with diplomas. The class was wholly composed of young ladies, who had the pleasure of reading their own essays.

Arms Academy, in Shelburne Falls, was a well conducted school, with about 75 scholars and a full corps of able-bodied teachers. The Prospect Hill School for Girls was mentioned quite frequently, too.

The Bay State Telephone Co. terminated its 14 months and 3 weeks of fruitful service when it participated in the formation of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., and further events relating to the telephone business in Greenfield will be found in Chapter 18.

## CHAPTER 13

### *New England Telephone and Telegraph Company*

THE stage was now set for the consolidation of several of the telephone companies which served most of New England. For some time there had been rumors of such a merger, and on Oct. 12, 1883, the *Springfield Daily Republican* announced that negotiations for another consolidation of New England telephone exchanges have been completed at Boston, and meetings of stockholders for ratification have been called.

Before proceeding further with a subject which involves the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co., an existent corporation, it may be advisable to state that while the data presented herein is believed to be correct, it cannot be guaranteed,—et cetera.

The stockholders of the Suburban, Bay State, and Boston & Northern Telephone Companies met at Lowell and voted unanimously in favor of consolidation. The National Bell Telephone Co. of Maine and the Granite State Telephone Co. held its stockholders' meetings on October 18 and 19 at Portland and Manchester, respectively, and voted to cast in their lot with the other New England companies.

The nucleus of this consolidation was the Telephone Dispatch Co. of Boston, which was owned by the American Bell Telephone Co.

Excerpts from a news account, which described in more detail the terms of settlement, are taken from the *Springfield Daily Republican*:



### *The Telephone Consolidation*

“The terms of the consolidation of the American Bell Telephone Co.’s Boston interests with those of the New England companies controlled by the Lowell syndicate, are published. The new company is to have a capital of \$12,000,000, to be distributed as follows: National Bell of Maine, \$1,350,000; Boston and Northern, \$980,000; Bay State, \$840,000; Suburban, \$603,700; Granite State, \$121,500; Boston Dispatch, (for property, etc.) \$1,947,600; American Bell, \$4,058,400 (41%); total of \$9,901,200. Of the balance of \$2,098,800 remaining in the treasury, \$1,238,300 is to be sold for working capital, and \$860,500 (41%) given to the American Bell Telephone Co. for franchises.”

An article in the Springfield *Daily Union* shed further light upon this subject:

### *The Telephone Arrangement*

“The new telephone consolidation plan includes the surrender by the existing companies of their present licenses and rights. The name of the consolidated company is to be “The New England Telephone & Telegraph Co.”, and it is to be organized under the New York law as the Mass. law prohibits the organization of companies with greater capital than \$1,000,000, except by special act of the Legislature. The headquarters will be at Boston and the Lowell syndicate, who will have the active management, will remove their offices to Boston about November 1. The officers of the new company will probably be as follows: Theodore N. Vail, President; William A. Ingham, Vice-president; William R. Driver, Treasurer; Charles J. Glidden, Secretary; Loren N. Downs, General Manager; Theodore N. Vail, Charles P. Bowditch, J. E. Hudson, Charles J. Glidden, Frederick Ayer, William H. Forbes, Alexander Cochran, William A. Ingham, Stephen Salisbury, Jr., Directors. Theodore N. Vail, William A. Ingham and one other, Executive Committee. It is believed that the securing of the Boston Exchange, which, it is thought, will soon have 5,000 subscribers, will enable the consolidated company to

pay 6 per cent dividends on its capital, and that the perpetual contracts which it secures will more than offset the increased holdings in its stock given to the American Bell Co.

“The Pioneer Telephone Co. of Lowell, which owned two telephone lines between Lowell and Boston, sold its franchise and property to the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. at the rate of one share of Pioneer stock for four of New England. The Pioneer Company had been paying dividends of over 30 per cent.”

The partition of the new company into divisions was described by the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* of Dec. 24, 1883: “At a recent meeting of the Directors of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., it was decided to divide the territory into six divisions, as follows: Boston Division, including that city and suburban towns, in charge of Col. Plympton of Boston; Essex County Division, comprising Salem, Haverhill and Lawrence, in charge of S. F. Smith of Salem; Worcester Division, taking Lowell, Nashua, Worcester and Fitchburg, in charge of W. H. Black of Worcester; Portland Division, including Portland, Bangor and Southern Maine, in charge of W. A. Farnum of Portland; Western Division, including Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, Palmer, Westfield, Pittsfield, North Adams, Great Barrington and Greenfield, in charge of F. G. Daboll of Springfield; Northern Division, including Northern Worcester and Franklin Counties in Mass., and the states of Vermont and New Hampshire (excepting Nashua and Concord, which go into the Worcester Division) in charge of J. B. Hunt of Greenfield. The Northern Division office will for the present remain in Greenfield.”

The organization of the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. did not bring immediate prosperity to the stockholders, but hope for a brighter future was held out in this *Republican* item of March 27, 1884: “The Directors of the New England Telephone Co. at a meeting at Boston today voted unanimously to pass the dividend for the present quarter and use the money for construction purposes. The Company’s business is increasing and it is having good net earnings and its managers say that it will, in a short time, be able to meet its

construction expenses and pay dividends out of its earnings.”

On Feb. 1, 1884, the New England Telephone Co.'s stock sold for 44½. March 27th, when the dividend was passed, it sold down to 29½ and by June 30th it had declined to 19. A business depression had started in early 1883, which, no doubt, added to the decline of the stock. During the latter part of 1884 more confidence in the business outlook developed, and the price of the stock rose to 36, and continued to improve with the growth of the Company.

The presidents of the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co., and the years in which they were elected were: Theodore N. Vail in 1883, Thomas Sherwin in 1885, Jasper N. Keller in 1910, Philip L. Spalding in 1912, Matt B. Jones in 1919, John J. Robinson in 1934, Joe E. Harrell in 1944 and Erskine N. White in 1956.

## CHAPTER 14

### *Events Pertinent to Western Massachusetts*

THE first New England Telephone Topics modestly made its appearance in May, 1907. The cover bore the picture of Theodore N. Vail, President of the American Telephone & Telegraph Co.

The first paragraph of the first editorial entitled "Whys and Wherefores" is quoted: "Telephone Topics does not claim to fill any 'long felt want.' It represents, at the moment, only the concentrated enthusiasm of a few employees of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company. Their enthusiasm crystalized into a theory that a publication of this kind would be a valuable educational medium for the exchange of ideas and information, and for developing the *esprit de corps*. They advanced this theory so persistently that the Company, after some deliberation, assented to it. Briefly this is, to date, the life history of the publication.

May, 1907, Topics—The Telephone Employees' Association of New England.

The Telephone Employees' Association was started in November, 1900, with 21 members. It was the successor of one that had been in successful operation for ten years, but which practically was limited to employees of the Boston Division. To extend the benefits of such an organization, the new society was formed.

John A. McCoy, Division Engineer, Boston Division, was one of the founders of the present organization, and is one of the Board of Directors and Secretary. The twenty-one men

who responded to a letter he wrote, formed the nucleus of the present Society.

There were two classes of membership: Class A, which hadn't been developed to any extent thus far, was intended to be the social and educational feature of the Association; the Class B section, the principal purport of the Association, had to do with the financial benefits.

Sept., 1907, Topics—The Telephone Society of New England.

This Society was organized in Boston in 1902. Every male employee of the A.T.&T.Co., the N.E.T.&T.Co., or any other licensee company of the A.T.&T.Co., is eligible for membership, the annual dues being \$2.00, meetings being held on the second Tuesday of each month from October to June, inclusive, and that papers on subjects interesting to telephone men were presented at each meeting.

### *Operating Reorganization*

Topics of August, 1908, reported the Operating Reorganization, effective Aug. 1, 1908, involving the establishment of three departments—Commercial, Plant and Traffic. In place of the Division Superintendents, there were Division Commercial, Plant and Traffic Superintendents. The Divisions, now comprising Boston and Southern, Mass., Central, Western and Eastern, were divided into districts, which were headed by district Commercial Managers, Plant Chiefs and Traffic Chiefs. The Western Division had four districts,—Springfield, Pittsfield, Worcester and Greenfield.

### *Merger of Telephone Societies*

Topics of May, 1911: A joint committee appointed by the Telephone Employees' Association of New England and the Telephone Society of New England to consider the practicability of merging the two societies makes these recommendations:

- (1) That a new society shall be formed to take the place of the Class A section of the Telephone Association and of the Telephone Society.

- (2) That this Society shall be called the Telephone and Telegraph Society of New England.
- (3) That any male employee of the New England Telephone Co. and the associated companies, and of the American Telephone Co. and the Western Union Telegraph Co. may be eligible for membership.
- (4) That the purpose of the society shall be to cultivate in its members an intelligent appreciation of the importance and value of telephone service, and to encourage and aid them to fit themselves for their present and future responsibilities and to co-operate with the company in the development of an efficient and enthusiastic force.

### *Death of Thomas Sanders*

Aug., 1911, Topics—The foster father of the telephone died at Derry, N. H., August 7, nearly 72 years of age. He financed Bell, endowed him with hope as well as with funds, and by his rare optimism encouraged Bell to renewed effort at moments when he was on the verge of despairing.

Professor Bell went to live with the Sanders family, in Salem, as teacher of their deaf-mute child, George. He carried his dream of the sound-carrying invention with him to Salem.

Here Bell was given permission to use the cellar of the house as his work shop. For the next three years this cellar was his favorite retreat, no outsiders being allowed to enter it. Often in the middle of the night he would call Mr. Sanders to see if he thought there was any improvement in his machine.

### *Worcester Fire*

A disastrous fire occurred in the Worcester Telephone building at 2:45 on Saturday morning on March 28, 1914, which put out of commission every local line in the two exchanges, Park and Cedar.

Within an hour after the fire, the work of restoration commenced. The Company executives gathered and determined on the essential things to do. Before noon 200 of the most skillful switchboard and plant men were on the job being summoned from Boston, Providence, Springfield, Pittsfield

and many other places. The long, hard, steady pull continued until, at last, nine days from the start, the end came.

Fortunately, the permanent Cedar switchboard had not been quite completed, the subscribers being served on a temporary switchboard. At the time of the fire there was not a wire on the Cedar intermediate frame. In 24 hours it was in complete working order and service was being given in that exchange to 3,000 subscribers.

The Park switchboard had to be restored to its former condition. It is estimated that on the Park intermediate frame alone over 12,000,000 feet of wire were removed and replaced by dry wire, and the total number of soldered connections aggregated hundreds of thousands.

### *Transcontinental Line Opened*

The ceremonies connected with the celebration of the opening of the telephone line from Boston to San Francisco were held at 125 Milk Street, Boston, at 8 P.M., Jan. 25, 1915. There were about 150 guests there. Philip L. Spalding, President of the New England Telephone Co., presided at the meeting, acting for the American Telephone Co.

The historic achievement prior to this was the opening of the Boston-Chicago line on Feb. 7, 1893, by Governor Russell of Mass. And it was only in 1871 that Alexander Graham Bell came to Boston as a teacher of visible speech.

### *Wireless Telephony*

The Nov., 1915, Topics reported another wonderful event. Within less than a year after the first talk across the continent by wire, another stupendous achievement of the engineering corps of the American Telephone Co. followed. On Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 27, 1915, the human voice traveled between New York and San Francisco without the aid of wire, by means of wireless telephone apparatus and methods developed by the Engineers of the Bell System.

### *New Credit Union*

April, 1917, Topics—Several men in the Commercial Department of the Company have organized the Workers' Credit Union for the benefit of those who want to borrow money at a

fair rate of interest. Any member who desires a temporary loan will not be obliged to mortgage his furniture or make an assignment of wages. This new organization by employees and for employees permits shareholders to borrow without security of any kind, and receives deposits and pays interest on monthly balances.

### *War Activities*

Telephone Topics of May, 1917,—American flags are now displayed in nearly every operating room in our territory and from many central office buildings the stars and stripes wave in the breeze.

Many members of the Company have been chosen for service on the various public safety committees of four of the states in New England.

One man now governs the telephones, Theodore N. Vail, President of the American Telephone Co. For the first time in telephone history regular and independents are working together side by side for the good of the country.

On October 24, Topics reported that President Spalding had received a call for war service. That night he departed, commissioned a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Signal Corps. Vice-President Jones assumed the responsibility of directing the affairs of the Company in President Spalding's absence.

Farewell parties to departing men and women abounded throughout the Company. The Telephone Operators Unit for service in France was one of the big features of the Liberty Loan Parade, as 80,000 people, men and women, marched through Boston's streets on April 6, 1918, the telephone section being headed by Vice-President Jones and General Manager Driver, Chief of Aides.

The third Liberty Loan was subscribed to by 10,200 employees (more than 75% of the total number). Knitting clubs did valiant duty, providing soldiers and sailors with warm stockings and sweaters. Thrift Stamp campaigns and numerous parades also were well supported by the employees.

On Nov. 13, 1918, it was Colonel Spalding of the United States Army; on November 14 it was again President Spalding of the New England Telephone Co. Many articles now ap-



peared in Topics telling of the return of our boys and girls and relating their experiences.

Jan., 1919, Topics—Multiplex Telephony.

Another triumph of science has been accomplished by the technical staff of the Bell System. Working together for years they have devised and developed an invention for multiplex telephony and telegraphy that is sensational in attainments. By their engineering skill they have made it possible to hold five telephone conversations simultaneously, or send forty simultaneous telegraph messages over a single pair of wires. A pair of wires can also be used partly for telephone and partly for telegraph purposes.

This new system has solved the problem upon which Dr. Alexander Graham Bell was working over forty years ago when he invented the telephone. It will be of great value in increasing the message-carrying capacity of long telephone and telegraph wires, but will not be practical on short lines.

It was while working on the problem of multiplex telegraphy that Dr. Bell had his first conception of the structure of the original telephone.

June, 1919, Topics—May 23 the 401st Telegraph Battalion, with more than 180 men, commanded by Major L. W. Abbot, landed in Brooklyn and were welcomed by President Jones and other officials. On May 28, a wonderful reception met them on their arrival in Boston—a parade, dinner and dance.

### *The New Telephone Society*

The Telephone and Telegraph Society of New England held many interesting meetings and its membership grew apace. As time went on, however, the Chapter activities diminished, and fewer members attended to discuss phases of the telephone art or to listen to other topics.

The Traffic Chapter, however, conducted a successful program each year and many of the meetings were attended by other Company Employees.

In November, 1919, the Traffic Chapter voted to assume the name of the Telephone Society and to take in the same number of members from other departments and the American Company as there were Traffic members. Its only mission

was to promote good-fellowship and to create and maintain an interest in telephone subjects and other subjects of general interest.

August, 1919, Topics—The telephone companies came back under private control and operation July 31, after just a year of control and operation by the Government.

Beginning Dec. 1, 1919, telephone operators in the Metropolitan Division stopped using the expression "I'll ring again," according to Topics. This is made possible by the introduction of an ingenious device that makes a distinct ringing signal when you make a local call.

#### *Springfield Credit Union*

March, 1921, Topics—The Springfield branch of the Telephone Workers' Credit Union was organized in February, 1918, starting with about 25 members. It steadily grew until now there are about 350 members.

#### *The Bell Loud Speaker*

April, 1921, Topics—March 4, 1921, the day on which Warren G. Harding became the 28th President of the United States, will go down in history with other momentous dates in the annals of science and human progress. For on that day the human voice, with all its nuances, and without distortion, was clearly heard and understood by an enormous crowd of 125,000 people that completely filled the plaza in front of the Capitol and overflowed into the park beyond.

This was made possible by the Bell Loud Speaker, in what has been called the most important telephone demonstration up to the present time. This new device is used in amplifying the human voice in public speeches.

May, 1921, Topics—"Greetings to you, President Menocal." With a smile of genuine interest President Harding spoke these words in Washington, Monday, April 11th, and formally opened the new telephone cable lines connecting the United States with the Island of Cuba.

#### *Providence Telephone Company*

On July 1, 1921, President Jones made the following announcement. It was addressed to employees.

“The New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. has this date acquired and will hereafter operate in its own name the property of the Providence Telephone Co. In connection with this union of the properties of the two companies, certain changes have been made in the officers of the New England Company.”

In September, 1921, there were approximately 18,500 New England Co. Employees in the five states in which this Company operates.

Jan., 1922, Topics—Some Storm!

The old timers cannot recall anything that was as disastrous as the ice storm that swept across the middle of Mass., the southern corner of N.H., and a large section of R.I. on November 27th, 28th and 29th. The storm damage will cost our Company more than \$1,500,000. and it will be weeks before the work of restoring broken poles and lines will be completed, despite record-breaking work by the Plant forces.

Trees uprooted, poles down, lines broken and twisted—it was indeed a weird sight. This storm was not a snow storm; it was not a sleet storm and it was not a wind storm—it was an ice storm, and ice from 2½ to 4 inches thick formed on the wires, causing them to sag and, in many cases, eventually break, laying more than 100,000,000 feet or 20,000 miles of wire, nearly enough to girdle the earth, dead and useless on the ground, together with more than 8,000 broken telephone poles in all sections affected by the storm. Highways and byways were blocked with fallen trees and branches of trees. Toll and local lines were down in every direction. Every available man who could be spared was rushed from Maine, N.H., Vt., and Southern N.E., the N.Y. and the Penn. Companies. Worcester was, perhaps, affected worse than any other section. From Tuesday, Nov. 29th up to and through Monday, Dec. 5th, the gangs worked from daylight until dark with unusual enthusiasm.

April, 1922, Topics—Telephoning to Sea.

On the evening of Sunday, March 5th, at about 7:30 o'clock, Mr. Thayer, President of the American Telephone Co., was called to the telephone at his residence in New Canaan, Conn., to answer a call from Captain Rind, who was on his ship, the

*America* of the United States Line, as it approached New York, but was still 24 hours from port. This demonstration of ship-to-shore telephony quite impromptu in character, was given to about a dozen newspaper men.

Feb., 1923, Topics—On the evening of January 14, another milestone in speech transmission was passed, when President H. B. Thayer of the American Telephone Co., speaking from 195 Broadway, New York, through Rocky Point, Long Island station of the Radio Corp. of America, talked by radio-telephony to New Southgate, England.

April, 1923, Topics—The cut-over of the Gaspee Machine Switching central office was successfully made at midnight on Saturday, March 10, 1923.

The placing in service of the first Machine Switching Central Office in the New England territory marks the beginning of a new epoch in the Telephone Company's history and reflects great credit on the Telephone Company's Employees and on the Western Electric Co's. forces who engineered and installed the equipment for the Central Office.

May, 1923, Topics—It was on March 22, 1923, that the Public Address System was demonstrated to New England. It was perfected by the engineers of the American Telephone Co., and the Western Electric Co., and will be a valuable asset to Bonifaces who would make their hotels the mecca of conventions and banquets.

It was at the Copley-Plaza Hotel, Boston, that the Western Electric Public Address System had its first permanent installation in New England. And to the Boston Chamber of Commerce belongs the distinction of being the first organization in New England to use this voice amplifier.

July, 1924, Topics—In a demonstration at the headquarters of the Bell System, 195 Broadway, New York, on the afternoon of May, 19, 1924, photographs were transmitted over a long distance telephone circuit from Cleveland, Ohio, to New York City.

The newspaper reproduction of them clearly showed each detail of the originals and their publication brought forth wide spread commendation for the engineers of the American Telephone Co. and the Western Electric Co., who jointly de-

veloped the apparatus used in this latest triumph of the art of communication.

April, 1926, Topics—First Public Test of Two Way Talk Across the Ocean.

“Stand by, New York. Before putting on the next speaker, we’re going to open the windows and see if you can hear the chimes of St. Paul’s.”

Exactly on the hour of eleven there came to the ears of the listening Americans the peal of a bell rung nearly four thousand miles away—then another and another until four had been sounded.

This first public demonstration of two-way telephony across the Atlantic took place exactly fifty years after the granting, on March 7, 1876, of the first telephone patent to Alexander Graham Bell.

Dec., 1927, Topics—Vermont Flood.

The prelude began on Wednesday, Nov. 2, 1927. A heavy rainstorm had set in, but it caused no anxiety at the moment. Vermont is accustomed to heavy rainstorms at that season of the year. It is accustomed, also, to the usual after-effects when the rain-water, rushing from its mountain sides, converts shallow streams into roaring rivers.

No such rainfall as that of November 2, 3 and 4 had ever been experienced over so wide an area, however. Seven to nine inches of rain came down. It not only overflowed river banks, but in its onrush took the banks with it. It carried along on its crest houses, barns and bridges. Worst of all, it broke through dams and reservoirs and thus added the pressure of solid avalanches of water. These avalanches washed out great steel railroad bridges, tore away railroad road-beds, and twisted steel rails into masses of junk. Singly and in groups the troubles increased until, on Friday practically all telephone circuits in and into the state, except to White River Junction and to Bennington, had gone.

The mobilization of men and material that followed was a wonderful exhibition of intuition and stick-to-it-iveness.

It may not mean much to the casual reader to say that 450 toll circuits were broken by the flood and that inside of exactly one week from the date of the first break every telephone office

in Vermont, whether in the territory of the New England Company, or that of a connecting company, had been reconnected by toll circuits.

The resourcefulness and determination of our Plant forces in restoring these broken lines of communication is matched by the story of the persistence and efforts of our Traffic employees in operating these restored lines of communication.

Nov., 1927, Topics—The formal opening of telephone communication between the United States and Mexico, on Sept. 29, 1927, added one more to the list of countries to which it is possible to telephone from any point connected with the Bell System.

Feb., 1928, Topics—New England Company Buys Telephone Instruments

In the early days of the telephone business it seemed essential that telephone instruments be owned and maintained by a central organization. This condition no longer obtains. Therefore, effective at the end of 1927, the American Telephone Co. offered to sell and the New England Co. bought the instruments in use on its lines but heretofore owned and maintained by the American Company.

Dec., 1928, Topics—Two New Operating Units Formed

The territory of our Company will be organized into two distinct operating units on Jan. 1, 1929. These units will be known respectively as the Northern and the Southern areas. Both will have headquarters in Boston. There will be no change in Division and District lines or organization, and only incidental changes in personnel.

Each area will have its own General Manager, reporting to Robert F. Estabrook, who becomes Operating Vice-President.

Henry E. Darling will become General Manager, Southern Area, comprising the Metropolitan and Southern Divisions.

Andrew Schultz will become General Manager, Northern Area, comprising the Eastern, Central and Western Divisions.

It was in 1908 that the present system of operating departments was set up with the whole Company a single unit. We had about 250,000 stations.

After twenty years our stations are increased nearly five-fold. Our plant investment is multiplied by nearly eight. This

great growth has been paralleled by equal advances in equipment and methods.

Feb., 1929, Topics—On January 1, a new department made its debut. Hereafter we will have associated with each Division an Auditor of Disbursements.

## CHAPTER 15

### *Pittsfield Exchange Area*

THE New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., which was organized on Oct. 19, 1883, divided its extensive territory into six divisions, one of which was the Western Division, in charge of Frank G. Daboll of Springfield. Berkshire County constituted an important part of this division. George C. Millard, who had started the North Adams exchange and later became General Manager of the Bay State Telephone Co.'s Western Division, was retained as Manager of the Pittsfield Exchange.

An altercation regarding telephone pole lines was about the first thing that greeted the new management. The situation was described in the *Republican* of Nov. 15, 1883: "The Telephone Company has asked of the selectmen the privilege of placing poles through North Street for the use of their wires. People are complaining so much about the wires being run across the roof of buildings that the Company finds it necessary to take them off."

At a hearing, the selectmen decided the Telephone Company must reach its central office in the Berkshire Life Building by some other route than through the main streets. There seemed to be a general feeling in all the towns hereabout against the locating of telegraph and telephone poles in the streets.

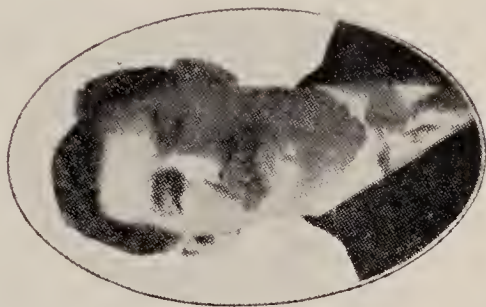
On Nov. 28, 1883, the *Republican* stated that the Telephone Company had three routes fixed for reaching the central office and were setting their poles through McKay and other back streets. They had arranged to use from 20 to 40 wires on each set of poles. Business was good, and more and



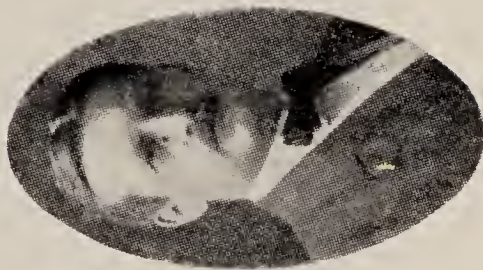


PITTSFIELD DISTRICT MANAGER AND MANAGERS—1911

*Left to right:* F. P. Tucker, Great Barrington; W. H. Stedman, North Adams; District Manager H. E. Hughes; W. E. Bissell, Bennington; W. I. Mellen, Pittsfield.



MELVIN HUTCHINS



JAMES H. BARRY





PITTSFIELD BUSINESS OFFICE—1929

*Seated, left to right: M. O'Brien, H. Cheyne, B. Olmstead, A. Nelligan, M. Powers. Standing, left to right: A. Joyce, A. Danforth, G. Cheney, Manager; A. Morton, C. Mandell.*



more wires had to be strung to care for their increasing patronage.

The following item regarding Pittsfield's foremost inventor appeared April 2, 1884: "Inventor G. H. Bliss has for some years been working upon the experiment in long distance telephony and has obtained a patent which will probably be bought by the Bell Telephone Company, if he is willing to sell it. He says that the secret of the experiment is in the metallic circuits, and that it will soon be an easy matter to talk between places 1,000 miles or more apart. His new signal clocks give satisfaction and are being set up in several places."

A couple of weeks later it was announced that inventor George H. Bliss had concluded to accept the offer made by the Bell Telephone Company to go to New York and take charge of the long distance telephone and would remove his family to New York and sell his property in town. A report of his progress in New York was given in the August 5, 1884, *Republican*: "Inventor Bliss, who was in town over Sunday, is now working on his long distance telephone system in New York, and says he has it so perfected that conversation is easily carried on between New York and Boston. He says the managers are arranging to put up lines to the principal manufacturing towns in the state, and that 100 lines are being run into Philadelphia."

The electric light business was now getting started in earnest, and the *Republican* of Dec. 22, 1884, tells of what was happening in Pittsfield. "The business men who have had a 25-light Thomson and Houston dynamo on approval for about a month, have formed a corporation and will control this kind of electric lighting for the town hereafter. They have 18 lights in operation and applications for the others. They will call themselves the Pittsfield Electric & Illuminating Co. and charge 60 cents a night for a single light or 50 cents each for two or more. The light is giving good satisfaction."

James H. Barry, according to *Telephone Topics*, began in 1886 as Inspector in the Pittsfield exchange, at a time when the title of Inspector covered a multitude of duties. From his

Pittsfield job he was called back to Great Barrington, his native town, to become Manager of the exchange there.

A later issue of *Topics* reports the following: "The Dalton exchange was opened in a suite of rooms on the second floor in the Center block at the corner of Main and Depot Streets, Oct. 21, 1900, with Blanch E. Smith in charge. She had a night operator to help her. A two position village board was installed with one position equipped.

"A canvass was made and a list of 50 subscribers was obtained. Free service was given for a short time to a number of interested parties. Very few of the number given the free service were willing to have the telephones removed after the free try-out."

The *Sunday Morning Call* of July 20, 1890, reported that Eugene M. Wilson is the Manager of the Pittsfield exchange, the address of which is 30 Berkshire Life Insurance building, 3 North Street, on the third floor.

Later on, *Telephone Topics* gave further details regarding Manager Wilson: He was born in Worcester and joined the infant company there as a night operator in 1879, under J. F. Reynolds, who was Manager. In the next two years, he was Chief Inspector for the Bay State Telephone Co. in Worcester and from 1881 to 1883 he was Supt. of the Worcester exchange. He became Manager and Wire Chief after the New England Telephone Co. was organized. Later he went to Pittsfield as Manager of that exchange.

It was not until Jan. 5, 1891, that Pittsfield adopted the city form of government. The Stanley Electric Manufacturing Co. was organized at that time by William Stanley, Jr., with \$25,000 capital stock and started operations in a small wooden building on Clapp Avenue. This company was later acquired by the General Electric Co. of Schenectady.

In 1897 George B. Church, a Great Barrington youth, who had gone to Westfield in 1894 to be night operator, came to Pittsfield. He returned to Westfield in 1900 to be Manager.

#### PITTSFIELD "CUT OVER"

The Berkshire *Evening Eagle* of Feb. 22, 1904, gave prominence to a Pittsfield event: "But four seconds were required

Saturday evening, February 20th, to 'cut over' from the old magneto call system to the new and modern electric light signal system of the local branch of the New England Telephone Company.

"S. F. Parker, Service Inspector, was assigned to the old office in the Berkshire Life Insurance Company's building and Kenneth P. Lippincott, Chief Service Inspector, to the new building on Pearl Street. J. F. Toomey, of the Chief Engineers office, and one of the cleverest men in the business, was at the test set in the basement of the new building. Supt. F. G. Daboll and Local Manager Hughes were at the switchboard. At a given signal from Inspector Parker the coils were drawn in the old office. At the same moment Supt. Daboll pulled an ivory handled platinum switch which transferred all of the old connections to the new and started the new office in full operation.

"S. F. Parker has had charge of instructing the operators. A. McAulay was in charge of the outside construction work. J. A. Ayles, R. L. Call and Mr. Lippincott, of the Engineers office, will remain a few days for observation.

"There are about 400 lines in the exchange and 1200 subscribers, necessitating 7 toll operators and 8 local operators.

"On the main floor, in front, are the offices of Manager Hughes and his assistants. In the rear and adjoining the office is a spacious room devoted to operators."

The Middlefield exchange, according to a later *Topics*, was installed in the home of the agent, Mrs. Helen Cook, in October, 1905, where it remained until March 13, 1940, when it was cut over from magneto to community dial. At the beginning, the exchange belonged to the Westfield Manager's area.

The first number of *Telephone Topics* appeared in May, 1907, and it has enjoyed an uninterrupted circulation since then. Pittsfield, being a District Headquarters, received a great deal of publicity in the *Topics*, which information has been extensively used in the following pages.

Harold E. Hughes was Manager of the Pittsfield Area when *Topics* started its career, and Mrs. Middleton was Chief Operator.

A PBX No. 1 of 10 stations was installed at the Pittsfield Electric Co. in Nov., 1907.

The Operating Reorganization became effective Aug. 1, 1908, involving the establishment of three departments—Commercial, Plant and Traffic. According to the new setup, Harold E. Hughes was made District Manager; George L. Call, District Plant Chief; Thomas Ewart, District Traffic Chief.

W. I. Mellen took Mr. Hughes' place as local Manager, and soon closed a contract for a No. 2 PBX in the new Agricultural Bank Building in Pittsfield.

L. B. Streeter was appointed Wire Chief of the Pittsfield District. Soon, the name of this eligible bachelor was taken by a young lady from North Adams.

C. L. Vaughn was appointed District Engineer Sept. 1, 1908. He was first employed May 1, 1904, in Boston, by the late Jasper N. Keller. His work at that time was in the underground cable dept. as Engineer, working under the supervision of the late George Hall. After three years in that dept., he was transferred to Harry L. Jones in the Engineers Dept., at Springfield.

C. E. Morey, at that time, was combination man in Dalton, and it was announced that he and Miss Fitch, an Operator in the same exchange, were soon to be married.

April, 1909, Topics—On March 17, 1909, a chapter of the Telephone Employees' Association was organized in Pittsfield. Fifty three applications for membership were signed for Class A membership, several signing for both Class A and B. (Class A was the social and educational section. Class B provided financial benefits.) Several visitors from out of town were present to help in the good work, among them being F. G. Daboll, Division Commercial Supt.; Augustus McAulay, District Plant Chief, Springfield District; Harry Jones, Division Engineer; and Duncan McLennan, Plant Chief, Worcester. The following officers were elected: President, H. E. Hughes, District Manager; Vice-President, G. L. Call, District Plant Chief; Recording Secretary, Thomas Ewart, District Traffic Chief; Financial Secretary, F. A. Windover, Chief Clerk. Entertainment Committee: W. I. Mellen, Chairman; W. P. Du-



rant, Linden H. Phillips, Martin Kelly, B. Britt, A. D. Nicoll and F. P. Tucker.

The Pittsfield District then had these exchanges and managers: Great Barrington, F. P. Tucker; North Adams, W. H. Stedman; Bennington, L. E. Story; and Pittsfield, W. I. Mellen.

The Pittsfield Chapter of the New England Telephone Employees' Association held its monthly meeting in Hoosac Hall at North Adams on May 15, 1909. There were present about 50 members from the various exchanges throughout the district. The entertainment committee had prepared an excellent programme in the form of a minstrel show. The members taking part were Messrs. Tucker, Sammon, Powers, Kelly, Nolan, Orr, Fahey, Dunn, Durant and Vaughn.

The September meeting of this Association was addressed by C. L. Vaughn, District Engineer, who spoke of the Blocking system, and W. P. Durant, Wire Chief, who spoke on the duties of a Wire Chief.

Two resignations were recorded in the Nov., 1909, Topics: L. H. Phillips, District Foreman, Pittsfield District, has resigned his position, and Frank Holiday has taken his place.

Thomas Ewart, Traffic Chief, Pittsfield District, has resigned his position, and Mr. Joseph F. Burns has succeeded him.

C. L. Vaughn was promoted to the position of District Plant Chief Dec. 1, 1909.

Frank M. Collins started with the Company at Pittsfield April 18, 1910, as a Time Keeper and Paymaster for the construction crews. He said that "Wally" Parker was in charge of the cable construction in the Division, and that the trains, trolleys, and horse drawn vehicles provided the means of transportation. Those who used the trains very much bought a 500 mile mileage book at two cents per mile, a discount of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent. It wasn't until 1914 that Fords were used extensively.

Frank relates the following adventure: He was hurrying to the train one morning with \$600 payroll money and took a short cut through the freight yard. Suddenly, a rough appearing man stepped out from between two cars. Frank trembled

for the safety of his money. The man edged up to him and gruffly said, "Hey Mister, can you give me a nickle for a cup of coffee?" Frank felt so relieved he gave him enough, not only for a cup of coffee, but a whole meal,—thirty five cents.

The Oct., 1910, Topics reported that Mrs. Helen M. Middleton, Chief Operator of the Pittsfield exchange, tendered her resignation. Mrs. Middleton has been employed in this exchange since 1896 and has been Chief Operator since Sept. 1, 1907.

Miss Mary W. McGuire of Springfield succeeded Mrs. Middleton as Chief Operator.

A telephone story from Topics—Mrs. Naybor, "How do you know your husband was working down in the office?"

Mrs. Youngbride—"I telephoned and Central said 'Busy!'"

A very complete common battery system was installed at the General Electric Co.'s plant in the fall of 1910. It comprised a four-position board, main distributing frame, coil racks, type 11E storage batteries, charging apparatus and power generator.

To keep abreast of the times, District Manager Hughes, District Plant Chief Vaughn and District Traffic Chief Burns made a tour of the Southern New England Telephone territory.

Sept., 1910, Topics,—The development of the Pittsfield exchange has necessitated plans being made to add a second story to the Company's building on Pearl Street, which will probably be done this fall or early in the spring. The additional story will provide quarters for the District Plant and Traffic Chiefs, a rest room and separate locker room for the operating force. The Commercial Department's general office on the first floor will be enlarged by utilizing the room now used as a locker and rest room. (This new addition was completed in September 1911.)

The next month's Topics revealed that on account of the changes in rates it was necessary to increase the contract force in the Pittsfield exchange to seven men instead of four, as formerly. All two-party residence subscribers were canvassed and about 50% changed to the one-party service.

Cleveland A. Morey was appointed Wire Chief at Pittsfield

in December, 1910, succeeding Walter P. Durant, transferred to Springfield. Mr. Morey was first employed May 1, 1905, at Claremont, N.H. as a station installer. In October of that year, he transferred to general inspection work in the old Northern Area of N.H. and Vt. In February, 1908, he was transferred to Dalton as combinationman; and in August, 1908, he was transferred to Pittsfield, later working up through the various grades to Testman.

July, 1911, *Topics* depicted the rapid growth of the Pittsfield exchange during the past few years: In 1904, when the exchange was cut over to common battery system, there were 1200 subscribers. In 1907 these had increased to 2570, in 1908 to 2817, in 1909 to 3374, in 1910 to 4337 and at the present time to 4706.

This remarkable growth puts Pittsfield in the front rank of New England cities in telephone development with a record of a telephone to every seven people. In August, 1908, 17,500 local calls and 1047 toll calls were being handled daily. In June, 1911, these had increased to 30,379 local and 10,302 toll calls.

The July, 1911, *Topics* displayed a full page photograph of the Chief Operator and assistants at Pittsfield. The Chief Operator was Mary W. McGuire. Edith White was the Instructor, Anna Cooper the Clerk and the four Supervisors were Sarah Fitzgerald, Mary Solon, Gertrude Payne and Mrs. Mary Ryan. There were 32 other charming young ladies, who attended to the customers' needs at the switchboard.

Harold B. Ranshousen, a native of Williamstown, took a position in the Pittsfield Exchange as Collector and Contract Agent in November, 1911.

The new Telephone and Telegraph Society of New England was organized in April, 1911, by the merger of the Class A Section of the Telephone Employees' Association and the Telephone Society of New England. The Pittsfield Chapter Directory for 1911-1912 was given in the January, 1912, *Topics*: President, C. L. Vaughn; Vice President, G. Murray White; Treasurer, F. P. Tucker; Recording Secretary, W. P. Durant; Corresponding Secretary, W. E. Bissell; Papers and

Meetings Committee: W. A. Budrow, L. B. Streeter, F. A. Windover, K. S. Weeks; Entertainment Committee: H. Stevens Orr, Chairman; Question Box Committee: B. B. Britt, W. A. Budrow, L. B. Streeter, F. A. Windover.

At the meeting of the Telephone and Telegraph Society of N. E. on Jan. 3, 1913, Horace S. Holt, Field Engineer, spoke on "Distribution".

Everett W. Eldridge, Traffic Inspector, was transferred to the Pittsfield District in August, 1913.

Oct., 1913, Topics—Lenox Cut Over

On October 18, the Lenox exchange, with about 375 subscribers, was cut over to the Common Battery system, and the Central Office was moved from Main Street to Walker Street. The new switchboard is of the very latest type and has three positions. It is designed to take care of the telephone business for about two and a half years, when, it is estimated by telephone engineers, there will be approximately 560 subscribers. The new switchboard and its equipment cost about \$9,000. About 2400 inward and outward calls are handled on the Lenox switchboard on an average day.

March, 1914, Topics—Employees' Social Club

On February 26th a meeting was held at Pittsfield to organize a club for the promotion of sociability and good-fellowship. District Manager H. E. Hughes was appointed temporary chairman. The following officers were elected: Board of Governors, Anna G. Cummings, Chairman; Mary Solon, Anna Carroll, Elizabeth Powers, W. P. Durant, R. M. O'Connell, William Dollar; Treasurer, Anna M. Cooper; Secretary, J. F. Burns; Entertainment Committee, W. I. Mellen, Ralph Dicker, Anna M. Champagne, Elizabeth Sullivan, L. W. Kidney, Oliver H. White, Agnes E. Nelligan, Marion L. Burns, Sadie C. Fitzgerald, and Harry E. Illingworth. 60 members were enrolled.

At a meeting March 6th, the membership jumped to 94 and there was provided the following splendid musical programme, varied with lively games and puzzles that kept everyone busy looking for the answers: mandolin and piano selection, Miss Alice Clancy and Miss Frances Fitzgerald; song, "To Have, To Hold, To Love," John Fitzgerald; piano, violin and

cornet selection, Harold May, Frances Fitzgerald, Walter O'Donnell; song, "Little Irish Girl", Charles Creelin; song, "Take Me Back to Days Gone By", Samuel Brooks. After refreshments the fun continued till nearly twelve.

The above new Employees' Social Club started out well. A fancy dress dance was held on April 15th and a ball was scheduled for May 1st.

Following the disastrous fire which occurred in the Worcester Telephone Building at 2:45 o'clock on Saturday morning, March 28, 1914, the following Pittsfield men were called to help repair the damage; F. D. Viens, Earl Kimberley, James Molloy, Theo. Strahan, Forrest I. Brown, G. H. Marshall.

April, 1915, Topics—Heavy rains and thaw during the last of February were the cause of serious trouble to our toll lines and gave us our first real trouble on the transcontinental circuits.

On February 25th a huge ice jam swept over the banks of the Deerfield River at Buckland, piling the ice ten feet high, tearing up the railroad tracks, doing great damage to private property and razing seven poles on our Barre Plains—Troy line, which carries the important Boston—San Francisco circuits.

It was just noon when our Pittsfield office was notified and the emergency machinery, which is always ready, was started at once. The damage to the B. & M. tracks made it necessary to ship the emergency material from Springfield, via Greenfield, causing some delay. In the meantime, however, Foreman Ranney and helper had gone to the break on the wrecking train and lost no time in clearing away the wreckage and restoring the transcontinental circuit by suspending the No. 8 copper wires, that make up this circuit, for eight sections, in the air.

Wire Chief Streeter was soon at the break with reinforcements and an emergency cable was placed on temporary supports around the break and all service restored at 9 P.M. with great credit to all of the men engaged in the repairs for their prompt and efficient work.

In March, 1915, Peter F. Follett was promoted from Clerk in the Division Plant Accounting Office at Springfield to District Chief Clerk for the District Plant Chief at Pittsfield.

Dec., 1915, Topics—Cleveland Morey, Wire Chief at Pitts-

field, was chased by a huge bull moose on the Whitney preserve, October Mountain, September 30th, while he was repairing a telephone line. The animal chased him up a tree and would not budge for nearly an hour. Finally when the moose did disappear, and Morey descended from the tree, he was chased from the enclosure and was obliged to vault the nine foot wire fence to make his escape. He had just time to repair the telephone line when the animal first appeared.

Nov., 1916, Topics—Dalton's New Home

The new home of the Telephone Company in Dalton is now in complete working order. This exchange was established Oct. 21, 1900, with 50 subscribers. The office was then, as now, in charge of Blanche E. Smith, with a night operator to assist her.

The new building, which is located on Curtis Avenue, in the center of town, is equipped with the most modern common battery system, which was cut over May 20, 1916. It has a three position board with a capacity for three more. There are at the present time 403 stations which require the attention of six operators. This exchange has been noted for its numerous long distance calls, due to the fact of its being the home of the Honorable Winthrop Murray Crane, Ex-Governor of Massachusetts, Ex-Senator of the United States and a Director of the American Telephone Co.

It is with regret that the passing of Eugene M. Wilson, Dec. 4, 1916, is recorded. After serving as Manager of the Pittsfield exchange, he was transferred to Boston, about 1890, where he occupied various positions.

Frederic A. Holt, special studies man in the Metropolitan Division Traffic office, received the appointment of Traffic Chief in the Pittsfield District in April, 1917.

June, 1917, Topics—When the new accounting office at Pittsfield, Mass., was opened, Henry Pineles was promoted to Division Revenue Supervisor for that District. Mr. Pineles entered the employ of the Company in April, 1911, as ledger clerk in the Accounting Dept. In November, 1912, he was appointed Division Revenue Supervisor at Bangor, Me. After a few years in Boston he was awarded a larger assignment at Pittsfield.

In conjunction with the discontinuance of the Greenfield Accounting Office, the new office at Pittsfield will take care of the accounting formerly handled at Greenfield, with the exception of the Vermont subscribers.

W. I. Mellen resigned as Manager of the Pittsfield exchange in May, 1918, after serving in that capacity about ten years.

Allen K. Burrows, who was Manager at Southbridge, was transferred to Pittsfield to take Mr. Mellen's place.

Feb., 1919, Topics—George F. Cheney has been transferred from Pittsfield to North Adams to succeed David B. Dunham, who has been transferred to the Great Barrington Managership. He will assist Manager Stedman in the commercial work of the exchange.

Aug., 1919, Topics—The operators of the Pittsfield office of our Company held a banquet June 23, in honor of their fellow workers in the Pittsfield District who were in the service of their country during the war. The service men present were: James Center, Harold Ranshousen, James Mallory, Martin Kelly, Chester Reynolds, Oliver White, Howard Ellis, Ralph Dicker, and Fred Bassett. John Burwell was the only former employee who made the supreme sacrifice. Lawyer Charles E. Hibbard spoke, as did District Manager H. E. Hughes.

Sept., 1919, Topics—Three Pittsfield employees who have been with the Company a quarter of a century or more as of April 1, 1919, are: P. J. Callahan, Plant Dept., June 27, 1893; Edward S. Felter, Plant Dept., November, 1889; Myrtle M. Hammond, Traffic Dept., June 1, 1892.

Mrs. Katherine McCasland, the Company's Class F Agent at Hinsdale in 1920, and Miss Blanche E. Smith, Chief Operator at Dalton, had just completed ten years of service.

Charles Durant was mentioned as being District Foreman in that year.

In 1922, "Marty" Kelly was "imported" into Worcester from Pittsfield to help out from the effects of the ice storm, according to Topics. He was a Foreman on the job and he had three crews under his direction, which were doing their respective jobs in great style. That relieved Foreman "Marty"

a lot, but it didn't make him sit back, smoke up and just give orders.

Shocked Old Lady (to small urchin in street): "Whatever would your mother say if she heard you swearing like that?"

Boy: "She'd say, 'Thank Heaven!'"

"Why should she say that, you naughty boy?"

"'Cos she's been stone-deaf for 20 years!" *Tit-Bits*, London

Frederic A. Holt, District Traffic Chief, was moved from Pittsfield to Fitchburg in April, 1922. He established an enviable record and was known as a man who made and got the most out of a job.

Sept., 1923, Topics—C. L. Vaughn, District Plant Chief, on September 1st succeeded W. T. Durfee as Division Supt. of Plant for the Vermont Division. He has by hard work and energy, coupled with diplomacy and tact, risen to a responsible position.

Libius V. Gillis, Plant Supervisor of the Northampton District, succeeded Mr. Vaughn as District Plant Chief. He had served in many positions from 1901 in the Plant Dept. until 1921, when he was made Plant Supervisor of the new Northampton District.

Safety Instructor Kelly had a class under training in November, 1923, that practically completed 100% of the District Plant forces.

On Dec. 1, 1923, John F. Shaw was transferred from Northampton to Manager of the Pittsfield Exchange. He first became a member of our telephone family in April, 1916, as Commercial Representative at Worcester and his ability won him the promotion to Manager at Great Barrington in March, 1918.

John's efficient handling of that office was shortly recognized and on Jan. 1, 1919, he was transferred to Westfield as Manager, succeeding George B. Church, resigned, and again promoted on Dec. 1, 1919, to Manager at Northampton.

April, 1924, Topics—Party for "General" Hughes

Harold E. Hughes, former Pittsfield Telephone Manager, restored to health, was welcomed back to Pittsfield amid great enthusiasm Saturday night, March 1, by 160 New England



Telephone Co. representatives and special guests at a dinner at the New American Hotel.

Mr. Hughes was given a great ovation as he entered the dining room with Proprietor George W. Clark. Seated at the tables were representatives of all the 50 offices in the Pittsfield District and officials of the Company from Boston, Springfield, Northampton and Greenfield, the Pittsfield Chamber of Commerce, the Pittsfield Rotary Club and the Pittsfield Sunshine Club, of which the "General" is the chief exemplar.

The visitors included: Samuel Parker of Rutland, Vermont, Div. Supt. of Traffic; Division Engineer Harry L. Jones of Springfield, District Plant Chief Edward Quinn of Northampton, District Wire Chief Leslie Streeter of Northampton, Division Commercial Manager W. B. Northrup and Division Construction Supt. Augustus McAulay of Springfield and Donald Hughes of Boston, son of the "General."

"Cleve" A. Morey, Pittsfield Wire Chief, was transferred to the Valuation Department in August, 1924.

John F. Shaw, Manager at Pittsfield, was appointed Manager at Springfield in October, 1924.

Robert D. Fuller, Manager at Northampton, was appointed Manager at Pittsfield. "Bob", who joined the company at Worcester, March 17, 1912, as contract agent, has served as Manager at Great Barrington, Westfield and Northampton. He has taken an active interest in city affairs.

Charles H. Bauer started his telephone career in Pittsfield Oct. 13, 1924, as a Collector.

Nov., 1924, Topics—On September 22, Mr. Marden announced the appointment of J. W. Forssen, Division Supervisor of Plant Methods and Results, as successor to L. V. Gillis, District Plant Chief, who was transferred to Lowell.

Mr. Forssen has been in the Western Division for several years, having served in the capacity of Division Equipment Foreman, Division Supervisor of Supplies, Division Supervisor of Motor Vehicles and Division Supervisor of Plant Methods and Results.

Linwood L. Ross was promoted from Traffic Manager, Pittsfield District, to Division Toll Supervisor in the Division Office at Springfield in January, 1925.

Ralph E. Jones, of Boston, was appointed Traffic Manager of the Pittsfield District, succeeding Mr. Ross. Ralph entered the service as a Traffic Inspector on Sept. 22, 1919, and received the following assignments: Assistant Traffic Manager, Malden, and at Dorchester; District Traffic Manager, Mystic.

To bid good-by to Linwood L. Ross and to welcome Ralph E. Jones, the Pittsfield Exchange committee gave a holiday party. Mrs. Ross, with Elinor and James Ross, and Manager Robert D. Fuller, were other guests of the evening.

As a token by which to remember his three years in the Pittsfield District, Mr. Ross was presented with a Hamilton watch; and as protection against the Berkshire weather Mr. Jones received a pair of woolen mittens. Later, someone heard him express a wish for a pair of felt boots also, and the matter may yet be arranged.

Robert H. Lawton was appointed Wire Chief at Pittsfield in 1925. "Bob" entered the service in May, 1907, as night operator at Athol, his home town. He was promoted to the positions of Test Man, and PBX and Central Office Repairman. In 1913 he became Wire Chief at White River and in 1915 returned to Athol as Wire Chief. In 1917 and 1918 he spent 14 months in France, becoming Master Signal Electrician in charge of Central Office Installations; returning to Athol in 1919. He moved to Greenfield in 1923 as Wire Chief.

Frank M. Collins, on Sept. 7, 1925, was transferred to the Division Plant Accounting office at Springfield. Frank had been District Timekeeper and Paymaster for the Plant Construction crews, since 1910. About 1922, the Company began paying its employees by check; and Frank went with Cleveland Morey, Pittsfield Wire Chief, as his clerk. He later became Head Clerk for District Plant Chief Vaughn.

Peru had the distinction of having the smallest telephone exchange in Mass. It boasted 11 stations.

Oct., 1925, Topics—Mary Solon, Chief Operator at Pittsfield for the last 12 years, has resigned. Marion Hickey, former central office Instructress, has been appointed acting Chief Operator.

Among other changes recently made in the Pittsfield traffic office were the promotion of Love Beaulieu to Assistant Chief

Operator, Rose Putnam to Central Office Instructress, Agnes Dunn to District Instructress, Mary Cannon to Supervisor and the transfer of Margaret Powers to the Division Office.

In Oct., 1925, the Dalton exchange rounded out a quarter of a century of service. It has seven operators to serve the 818 subscribers.

Jan., 1926, Topics—Mary Solon, Chief Operator at Pittsfield for the last 12 years, after a career of approximately 28 years of service, retired from active service on November 1st.

When Miss Solon first entered the employment of the Telephone Company there were four operators and 400 subscribers in Pittsfield. She has seen the Pittsfield Exchange grow from that beginning to one which today serves 11,500 patrons and gives employment to 90 traffic employees.

In every assignment she was given, Miss Solon filled it with steadfast devotion to the ideals of our service, conscientious work and satisfactory results. Her many friends and associates will miss her genial personality for she was always an enthusiastic partner in business as well as in society.

Charles H. Bauer, Commercial Representative, was transferred to Great Barrington on May 3, 1926, as Manager.

Harold B. Ranshousen was appointed Manager at Pittsfield, Dec. 28, 1926, where he will succeed Robert D. Fuller, who has been appointed Manager of the Lawrence Exchange.

Ralph E. Jones was appointed Division Supervisor of Sales in the Commercial Dept., with headquarters in the Western Division office at Springfield.

May, 1926, Topics—Oscar E. Stanton, formerly Toll Traffic Manager at Providence, has been transferred to the Pittsfield District, as District Traffic Manager succeeding Ralph E. Jones.

Mr. Stanton began his service with the Telephone Company in 1908, in the General Manager's office in Boston. Since that time he has held the position of Night Operator, Service Inspector, Plant Engineer, Traffic Engineer, and Toll Traffic Manager.

April, 1926, Topics announced that Luke H. Moran passed away in Pittsfield recently. He was an employee of the New England Telephone Co. for 25 years.

Sept., 1926, Topics—George E. Wright has been appointed District Plant Supt. at Pittsfield, succeeding John W. Forssen.

In the fall of 1901, Mr. Wright entered the employ of the Company as Night Operator in the Haymarket Central Office in Boston. A few months later he was transferred to the Equipment Department as a clerk. In 1902 he was transferred to the General Dept. Later he became a Central Office Installer. In 1908 he became District Switchboardman at Greenfield and in 1914 he became Wire Chief at Keene, New Hampshire. He was transferred to the Western Division in 1925.

Topics printed a story from the *Toledo Blade*. The visitor called at the village library. "May I have the 'Letters of Charles Lamb'?" he inquired. "You're in the wrong building, Mr. Lamb," said the new clerk pleasantly. "The post office is just across the street."

The Company's personnel had increased so greatly that Topics was obliged to list most of the transfers briefly under the heading 'Changes in Personnel,' as follows:

Oct., 1926, Topics—H. E. Illingworth from District Store Keeper, Pittsfield, to District Supervisor of Supplies and Motor Vehicles, Pittsfield.

R. H. Lawtown from Wire Chief, Pittsfield, to Wire Chief, Worcester.

F. D. Handerson from Wire Chief, Great Barrington to Wire Chief, Pittsfield.

Dec., 1926, Topics—William M. Hoggan has been assigned to Pittsfield as Collector.

April, 1927, Olive E. Cole, formerly a Commercial Representative, has been transferred to the Pittsfield District office as Chief Clerk.

April, 1927, Topics—New District Formed

Effective February 14, Harold B. Ranshousen was appointed District Manager of the new Pittsfield District made up of Pittsfield, Great Barrington, North Adams and Greenfield areas. Mr. Ranshousen's activities have been centered within his new area, he having served as Great Barrington, North Adams, and Pittsfield Managers, three of the four offices making up the new District. (The Greenfield Exchange area

had been transferred back to the Pittsfield District from the Northampton District, which was discontinued.)

George F. Cheney, former Manager at Northampton, was transferred to the Managership of the Pittsfield Exchange.

Allan S. Morton, Directory Advertising Representative in the Springfield District, was transferred to Pittsfield to replace William Hoggan, who was transferred to Greenfield.

In the Spring of 1927, due to the increase in business, a new toll section and three subscribers' sections were installed under the hard work of Foreman W. A. Budrow and his crew of about thirty men.

July, 1927, Topics—The Pittsfield Manager's office has moved to its new quarters at 40 West Street. The District Manager's office is located at 126 Fenn Street.

Horace S. Holt, Division Plant Engineer, announced that effective June 1, 1927, J. J. McCarthy of the Springfield District Plant Engineers force is appointed District Plant Engineer at Pittsfield.

Walter P. Durant, who had been in the Pittsfield Plant Dept. for many years, was transferred to the Division Office at Springfield.

John M. Dick, Commercial Representative, was transferred to Burlington, Vermont, in June, 1927.

Nov., 1927, Topics—Big Job in Pittsfield

A large addition, involving several building changes and re-adjustments of forces, consisting of three new "A" sections of local board with 1200 new multiple and answering jacks, relocating of power plant and enlargement of all frames and racks, has been commanding the attention of our Central Office Equipment Installers since the first of January this year. The job is now nearing completion after a busy season.

During the peak of activity there were 36 men engaged in the work, five being originally in Pittsfield, five drawn from Springfield, six from Worcester, and twenty from Boston. The job was in charge of W. A. Budrow of Pittsfield. "Bill" is an old hand at the game, having completed over 30 years of service with the company. He was assisted by "Capt." Dan O'Meara with Lieutenants as follows: George Warren and George Beecher, Springfield; Bill Collins, A. McCaulay, Tom

McKenne, F. B. McKeon and A. C. Schliecher from Boston. Roger Burnham of Springfield was the "man behind the pen" and kept the J.I.M.'s and other job papers moving toward headquarters.

The Springfield *Republican* of Nov. 5, 1927, described the Becket catastrophe: Yesterday the stone dam at North Becket gave way and sent a column of water over 25 feet high and 150 yards wide roaring into the small town. Almost the entire village was in the path of this roaring wall, and houses, trees, telegraph poles and bridges were clipped off as if made of paper. One life was lost and more than 100 made homeless with over \$1,000,000 damage done.

Mr. Ballou, owner of the dam, raced his car ahead of the raging column of water shouting a warning. The Collingsburg Silk Co., formerly known as the Berkshire & Becket Silk Co., suffered the greatest single damage, its four story brick factory being carried away by the flood torrent.

Dec., 1927, Topics—Pat McCormick Hero at Becket

Patrick McCormick received a Vail medal for his devotion to duty with a cash award of \$250.

An outstanding telephone story of the flood revolves around the work of P. B. McCormick, Agent of the New England Telephone Co. at Becket, Mass., for 16 years.

Endangering his own life in order that the people of Becket might be warned, McCormick stuck to his switchboard until the water was three feet deep in the lower floor of his home and the switchboard went out of service.

When the water had receded, he connected wires to a pole a short distance from the central office and communicated with the Pittsfield office of the Telephone Company.

The lower floor of his house was badly damaged by water and covered with mud. The front half of a house not 15 feet away from the McCormick home was smashed and carried away in the high water.

The entire business section of the town, which included the silk mill, basket shop and saw mill, the post office, three stores and nearly 30 houses, was completely carried away by the high water, when the Wheeler dam broke about a mile from the town.

McCormick's notable work was a real service to the people of Becket. At the time the dam broke he was the only human being left in the village. There is no doubt that the splendid, courageous service of McCormick saved more than one life, and much personal property which was taken away by the fleeing townspeople before the dam broke.

Wire Chief Frank Henderson, of Pittsfield, was notified by local operators that telephone connection with Becket had been severed. He arrived in Becket at 8:45 A.M., and was unable to call Pittsfield, so he drove to Hinsdale and called Pittsfield for help.

John Gardner, with the White truck, and Festis Stafford with the Ford, and George Beauman, "Patty" Callahan and Johnny Drumm left immediately for Becket with wire and necessary material to restore service.

McGinnis and Jandro of the Plant Dept., with Allan Morton of the Commercial Dept., left Pittsfield about 10:15 with two telephone sets and new cords for the switchboard.

By dark Friday night, the men had a Pittsfield toll circuit, a Lee toll circuit and a Middlefield toll circuit as well as three local lines working in the board. Allan S. Morton served as emergency operator and John Kaley, spare night operator at Dalton, acted as night operator.

Saturday, nearly the entire plant crew went to Becket and ran wire for the rest of the circuits and local lines. Marguerite Tracey, Agent and Chief Operator at Chester, visited Becket on Sunday and relieved the operator during the afternoon and also helped out Monday and Tuesday, proving to be a great aid to the men in testing the lines.

Service was completely restored in Becket Monday night, November 7th.

Feb., 1928, Topics—Harold E. Hughes, for 29 years employed by the New England Telephone Co., a former Pittsfield District Commercial Manager, passed away on December 5th at his home in Springfield.

He was born in Hughesdale, Rhode Island, in 1865. In 1898 he became associated with the Telephone Company as Chief Operator in Holyoke. Later he was appointed Manager at Greenfield, then Manager in Pittsfield, and finally Com-

mercial Manager of the Pittsfield District. During the early years of the telephone industry, Mr. Hughes proved his ability, and through his untiring efforts the telephone business in Western Mass. was greatly developed and expanded.

The "Genial General," as he was familiarly called by his numerous business associates and social acquaintances, was a man beloved by thousands in all walks of life.

Elmer A. Wagner, former Sales Supervisor in the Springfield Commercial Office, has been appointed District Advertising Supervisor of the Pittsfield and Vermont Districts, February, 1928.

J. J. McCarthy, former Plant Engineer for the Pittsfield District, was made Plant Engineer for the Vermont District in September, 1928. "Jim" started work in the Engineering Dept. at Springfield and was later transferred to the Northampton District and then back to Springfield.

"Tom" W. Hyland, who has been Worcester District Maintenance Supervisor for the past three years, was transferred to the Pittsfield District in October, 1928.

An April, 1929, item tells of the No. 12 test board being moved to the Howard Building on Fenn Street to make room for additional toll switchboard, which was to be installed on the third floor of the Pittsfield Exchange Bldg. on Pearl Street. Wire Chief Henderson and his force were occupying enlarged quarters adjacent to the District Plant and Engineering offices in the Howard Building.

Telephone life wasn't "all work and no play." August, 1929, Topics describes this outing: The Pittsfield Business Office force enjoyed a flat rock fry on June 10, on West Mountain. Allan S. Morton and George F. Cheney were the chefs and provided a menu of steak, sweet potatoes, fried onions and the fixings. All plates were found empty in due course of time, and games were enjoyed until dark.

Those present were: Harold B. Ranshousen, District Mgr.; George F. Cheney, Manager; William M. Hoggan of Greenfield, Joseph A. Sneed, Allan S. Morton, John F. Enwright, Helen Cheyne, Olive E. Cole, Catherine Mandell, Agnes Nelligan, Blanche Olmstead, Mae Powers and Lydia Silliman.



Robert D. Fuller, New Hampshire Manager, was called to Pittsfield as the new District Manager in October, 1929.

Harold B. Ranshousen left the District Managership at Pittsfield to become Division Sales Manager for the Metropolitan Division.

A golf professional, hired by a big department store to give golf lessons, was approached by two women—"Do you wish to learn to play golf, Madam?" he asked one. "Oh, no" she said, "it's my friend who wants to learn. I learned yesterday." *Current Events.*

Despite the wintry weather in the Berkshires in January, 1930, District Foreman Hyland's crews were rapidly pushing ahead with the setting of some seven hundred poles and three hundred and fifty anchors in connection with the big Pittsfield estimate recently authorized. Leon Coons and Harry Lucas put down twenty-seven six-foot holes with the earth boring machine one forenoon recently, which is not so bad in Pittsfield's clay and rocky soil.

Jan., 1930, Topics—William H. O'Brien of the Department of Public Utilities spoke interestingly on the relations between his Department and the Company. More than 150 employees of the Pittsfield District attended the get together. Mr. O'Brien told of his experiences abroad, including his visit to the Peace Conference in Geneva. His talk was made interesting by his many entertaining and witty stories.

George F. Cheney, Manager, presided and Robert D. Fuller, District Manager, introduced Mr. O'Brien. Miss Carmella Bachkowski entertained with vocal selections.

May, 1930, Topics—New Pittsfield Building

Getting ready for the new dial telephone office at Pittsfield will be a big job. Before the new office is placed in service, in the fall of 1931, nearly \$1,250,000 will have been expended by the Company for the new building, the new dial equipment, for changes and additions to the cable plant and for replacing more than 13,000 telephones with the new dial instruments.

Excavation work at the corner of Federal Street and Wendell Avenue is completed and construction of the new building has begun. About October 1st the building will be com-

pleted and soon thereafter the installation of dial equipment will be started. There are now over 13,300 telephones in Pittsfield.

The new building will be built of brick with limestone trimmings, supported by reinforced concrete, and will be of the Georgian type of architecture. It will cover a ground area of about 160 x 70 feet.

In the basement there will be provision for a cable vault, power and heating plant and battery room.

On the first floor there will be the business office with an attractive lobby leading to the elevators and the stairway. In the rear of the first floor there will be a room containing repeaters.

On the front of the second floor there will be District offices for the Commercial, Plant and Traffic Depts. The entire third floor will be utilized for the dial equipment.

The operating room, sitting room, lockers, quiet room, kitchen, lunch room, and Traffic Dept. instruction room will be on the fourth floor.

June, 1930, Topics—Frank D. Henderson, Wire Chief, Pittsfield Area, is appointed District Maintenance Supervisor. Mr. Henderson is especially well qualified for his new job. He entered the employ of our Company in April, 1912, as night operator at Athol. Transferring to the Plant Dept. at Fitchburg in 1916, he successfully passed practically all the plant examinations from Class "C" Installer to Class "A" Testman within the next five years and was Testman at Fitchburg until 1923, when he was transferred to the Division staff at Springfield.

In 1924 he was acting Wire Chief for a few months at Greenfield, going from there to Great Barrington in the same capacity, where he remained until coming to Pittsfield in 1926.

C. D. Gould was appointed Supervising Cable Foreman in the Pittsfield District in June, 1930.

June, 1930, Topics—Luke E. Dean, of the Division Plant Supervisor's staff, succeeds Mr. Henderson as Wire Chief at Pittsfield. He is no stranger to the Pittsfield District, having served as acting Wire Chief for two months and made period-

ical trips through the District in connection with installation methods.

Mr. Dean was first employed by the New York Telephone Co. Installation Dept., in 1907. He transferred to the Illinois Bell in 1908, returning to New York in 1909 as PBX Installer. In 1913 he was transferred to the New England Company at Springfield where he served as substation PBX Installer and Repairman and District Inspector, going to Fitchburg in 1923 as Wire Chief. In 1925 he returned to Springfield as Division Station Installer and then Maintenance Supervisor in the force of the Division Plant Supervisor.

C. D. Gould, Splicing Foreman, was transferred from Fitchburg to Pittsfield to join the enlarged cable force in May, 1930. He started as a Cable Helper at Fitchburg in 1921 and was made a Splicer in 1922. When Foreman Baldwin was transferred to Worcester in 1928, he was appointed Splicing Foreman at Fitchburg.

Robert W. Murdick was appointed Manager at Pittsfield Oct. 1, 1930, succeeding George F. Cheney, transferred to the Central Division as Results Supervisor. "Bob" had been serving as Manager at Montpelier and prior to that, had acted as Commercial Representative in Springfield, Greenfield, Rutland and Burlington.

## CHAPTER 16

### *North Adams Exchange Area*

THE New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., having been launched Oct. 19, 1883, assigned the exchanges in Berkshire County to its Western Division, with headquarters in Springfield, and appointed Frank G. Daboll as Superintendent. William H. Stedman continued to occupy the position of Manager.

The fire alarm system, devised by Manager Stedman, had been adopted Sept. 13, 1883. Twenty telephones were to be installed in boxes attached to telephone poles throughout the town, and the Springfield *Republican* of Nov. 13, 1883, reported the work as practically completed. This project necessitated the running of quite a few additional wires, which caused many people regret to see so many poles and wires in the main streets.

An historic event was reported in the *Republican* of Nov. 15, 1883: "It is probable that the new standard time will be adopted in North Adams Sunday and arrangements will be made to have a whistle blow when it is 12 o'clock by the new time." This item did not pertain to daylight saving time but to the establishment throughout the nation of time zones about fifteen degrees wide, which are referred to as Eastern time, Central, etc.; and it behooves the traveler to change his watch an hour as he passes from one zone to another.

The subscribers were deprived of their telephone service one Sunday, when the Company put in a new Watson switchboard. The reason for this Christmas gift—it occurred Dec. 23, 1883—was that the exchange had then reached a total of

155 subscribers, 62 more than there were a year ago. This constant growth was attributed by the *Republican* to the satisfaction given by the management.

Those who are familiar with "Sted's" neatness and artistic temperament, will not be surprised at reading this item from the *Republican* of March 26, 1884: Manager Stedman proposes to prohibit posting bills on the fire alarm telephone poles, which have lately been painted."

In keeping with its practice in other exchanges, the Company granted the telephone operators a ten days' vacation without any reduction in their wages, which caused considerable rejoicing.

Dangers were encountered in those days of horse drawn vehicles, according to this excerpt in the *Republican*: "As General Superintendent Wheeler of the New England Telephone Co. and Manager Stedman of the local exchange were riding down Jackson Street the other day, the horse began kicking and Mr. Wheeler jumped from the wagon striking on his head and injuring himself severely.

The North Adams telephone quarters were moved to the corner of Main and Holden Streets in the Blackington Block in 1889 with two 50-line switchboards. One year later a three position multiple board, the first in New England, and the first metallic lines were introduced.

Allen C. Fitch started as a night operator in 1901. Two years later he had climbed to the position of Chief Operator.

Late in 1899 a movement got under way for a local exchange in Williamstown, but action was delayed because some were for it and others against. The objectionable feature to it was the disfigurement of the streets with unsightly poles. In February, 1902, the New England Telephone Co. presented a plan whereby it sought the privilege of erecting such poles as were necessary on Cole Ave., Water, New, and North Streets, a portion of South Street and perhaps Southworth Ave., but Main Street was not to be included. The Company would run its lines, when possible, in the rear of the houses.

The plan was favorably received and the Company dispatched Agent L. Foss to conduct a canvass. He soon secured

the requisite 50 names and kept on soliciting to make the exchange as large as possible.

The North Adams *Evening Transcript* next announced that a franchise was granted to the Telephone Company by the Selectmen March 27, 1902, which was signed for the Company by Jasper N. Keller, General Manager. Previous negotiations were conducted by F. G. Daboll, Division Supt., M. Hutchins, Supt. of Construction, E. W. Pelton, and L. Foss—all of Springfield.

The Williamstown exchange was opened Sunday morning, June 1, 1902, in a small room on the second floor of the Danforth Block on Spring Street. The number of subscribers had already reached 100, which required the services of two operators.

The *Transcript* added, "The exchange will include 2 automatic telephones very soon, two having been ordered. People talking through the telephones will deposit their money in receptacles made for that purpose instead of paying Mr. Noel or Waterman and Moore."

In 1903 a line was run to South Williamstown, and in the next few years permits were granted to place wires and poles along the streets and out into the rural districts.

"July 8, 1905, North Adams was placed on a par with the largest city in the country in respect to its telephone equipment." So stated the *Evening Transcript* of July 10th and thus continued: "Engineer George Call, who had charge of the work, sang out 'All ready'; the men pulled the strings, jerking out the coils; Manager W. H. Steadman at the same moment threw a small switch, and a new common battery switchboard was in operation. There were about 900 subscribers.

"Among the officials present were: Charles Herzig, Assistant Supt. of Construction; F. R. Clarke, Supt. of Boston office; J. S. Morse, Foreman of instrument work; A. Flister, same; K. P. Lippincott, Chief Service Inspector; E. E. Ramsdell, who has had charge of the testing of the cables, and S. F. Parker, Service Inspector."

George W. Duxbury joined the construction crew as a groundman in August, 1905 in the erection of telephone poles, working with G. Murray White and L. B. Streeter.

With the advent of Telephone Topics in May, 1907, a more intimate knowledge of telephone affairs was made possible.

In July, 1907, No. 12 copper circuits from Burlington to Rutland and from Rutland to North Adams were nearly completed.

David B. Dunham went to work in North Adams in October, 1907, as a Collector. When the practice of collecting was abolished, he became a Contract Agent.

The Jan., 1908, Topics featured an article on Manager W. H. Stedman, most of which information has appeared before. It was brought out that the present quarters were still at the corner of Main and Holden Streets in the Blackington Block and occupied the whole second floor, with the exception of two rooms. There were 37 employees, including 20 operators, on the pay roll. The central office had 57 trunk lines, 457 local lines and 27 pay station lines, and handled over 8,000 calls each day and was a switching point for east, west, north and south.

A characteristic of the Manager was disclosed in this article: "Every one who knows "Sted" is familiar with his hobby for neatness and cleanliness and with his anti-cigar views, and woe betide the luckless college student or person who ventures on the premises with a lighted cigar. His exit is more hurried than dignified."

Miss Cora Button took the position of Assistant Bookkeeper at the North Adams exchange, in place of Florence Graham, resigned.

The Operating Reorganization took effect Aug. 1, 1908, whereby three different departments were established,—Commercial, Plant and Traffic. The new heads of the Pittsfield District were as follows: H. E. Hughes, Commercial Manager; George L. Call, Plant Chief; Thomas Ewart, Traffic Chief.

The Nov., 1908, Topics reported that Miss Fannie Dodds has taken the position of Chief Operator at North Adams, made vacant by the transfer of Allen C. Fitch to Service Inspector for the Pittsfield District.

Feb., 1909, Topics showed the progress being made in the telephone business: "Workmen are placing the cables in the

underground conduits at Adams on several streets. This will remove a large number of overhead wires.

“The books and exchange sheets of the Adams and Williamstown exchanges have been taken to the Auditing office at Greenfield, to be followed next month by the North Adams books.”

An item from Topics tells of a method to transmit local news. “The new farmers’ line extending from Williamstown to South Williamstown district, was installed August 12th with sixteen subscribers.”

On such a line, news might get a little mixed, as in this Topics story—

Mother (to little daughter returning from Sunday School):

“Well, what was your lesson about this morning?”

Little Daughter: “A man named Solomon.”

Mother: “And what did you learn about Solomon?”

Little Daughter: “The teacher said he had 300 wives and 700 cucumber vines.”

Nov., 1909, Topics—Miss Agnes Bovie has been appointed Supervisor at North Adams to succeed Miss Florence Welton. Miss Florence Eldridge has been appointed night operator in place of Miss Bovie.

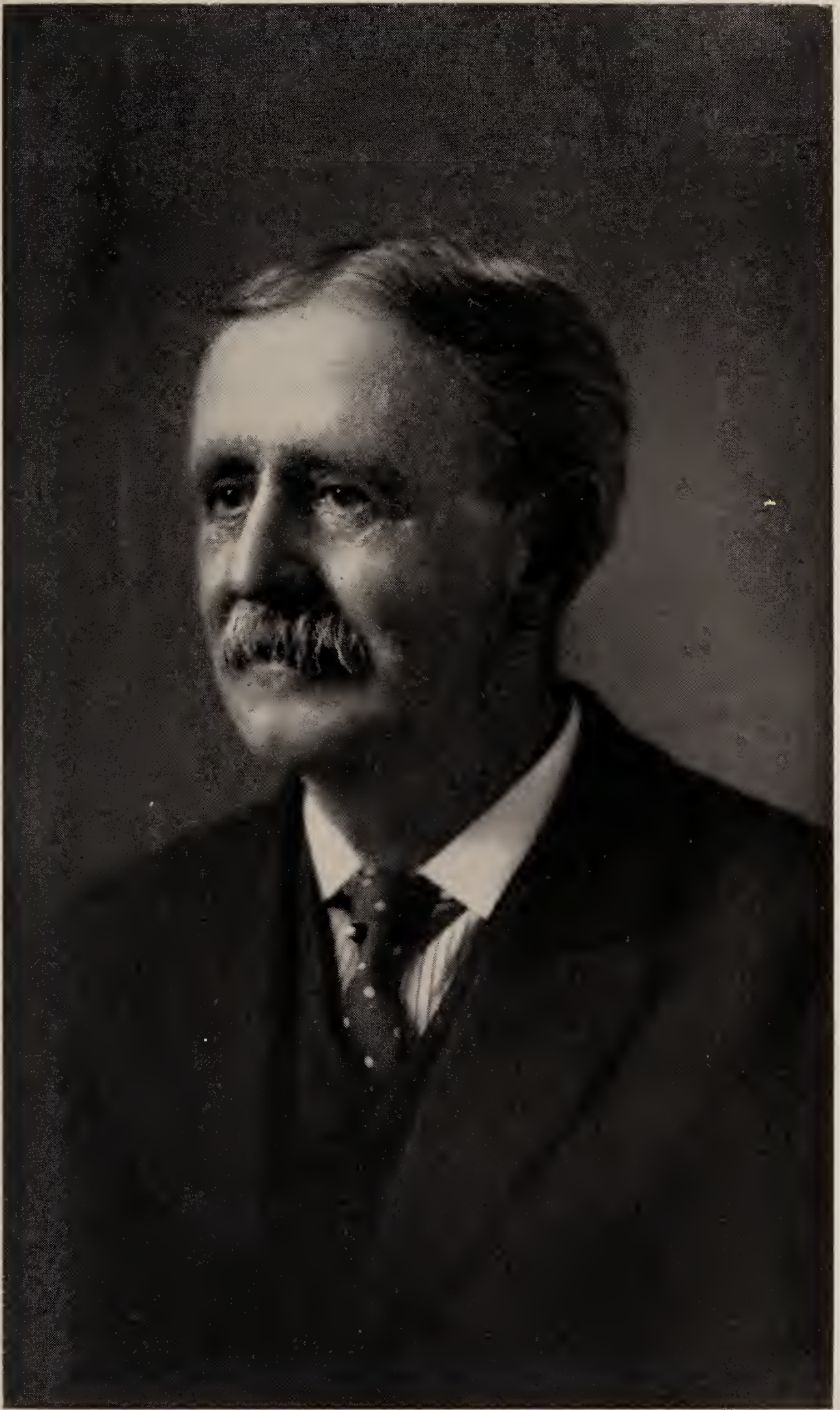
George W. Duxbury was promoted to Line Foreman for the Construction Dept. in 1910, in recognition of his service and ability.

Miss Edith M. Nicoll, formerly Chief Operator of the Williamstown Exchange, has resigned and is to be succeeded by Miss Gertrude A. Walden, who was formerly local operator in that exchange.

Canvassing continued unabated. Topics told of Solicitor Dunham, of the North Adams Exchange, taking nearly fifty contracts, a PBX No. 2 being placed in the Boston Store, and orders for two more about ready for signatures.

The Flying Squadron, in charge of Henry Levy, was making a canvass of Adams, North Adams and Williamstown, according to Topics: “One day Special Agent Levy was trying to convince a photographer that a telephone would be a good investment. He had about exhausted his persuasive arguments





WILLIAM H. STEDMAN



when the photographer made the proposition that if the Agent would have a photograph taken he would sign a contract.

“Levy was game. He wanted the business. He gathered his force, the photograph was taken, and the contract was secured.”

In July, 1911, Topics reported that many contracts were being taken in North Adams for special lines under the reduction in rates. A cable job had been engineered involving 920 feet of 400 pair cable, 1100 feet of 180 pair cable and 560 feet of 90 pair cable in under-ground conduits in anticipation of the changes in service.

In January, 1912, a No. 2 branch exchange was installed in the new North Adams *Transcript's* building on Bank Street by F. D. Viens.

This sales activity was evidently profitable. “The Commercial office at North Adams has been refurnished with an entire new equipment of desks, chairs, and filing cases, and is said to be the best appointed office in the division.”

Thomas F. Boyle, special agent from Springfield, was in Bennington securing rights of way for a new toll line from North Adams to Shaftsbury, Vermont.

Harold Ranshousen, the same month, took a position as a collector and contract agent at North Adams, under the watchful eye of Manager Stedman.

W. E. Cain's residence in Savoy, where a Class F exchange was located, was struck by lightning and nearly destroyed; the cable, wiring and switchboard being badly damaged.

Something of a more exciting nature was reported by Topics of Aug., 1912: “A fire destroyed four large blocks in North Adams early in July including the Empire Theatre, Empire Block, Sullivan Block, and the Wilson House, the latter being only forty feet from the telephone exchange, which was saved by the excellent work of the firemen.

“All of the operators were called, arriving at the exchange at 3 A.M. and did not leave their positions until the fire was under control. Although the heat was intense and both gas and electric lights were turned off, they were at work in total darkness, except the light from the fire.

“At the switchboard, side by side, operators, inspectors,

and linemen were answering calls. The Commercial Dept. had all reports, books, and cash packed up ready to move at a moment's notice. Men and teams were ready to remove as much of the furniture as possible. Asbestos blankets were placed over the windows of the operating room to keep out the fire and heat, but not one left his or her post."

Telephone Topics printed a piece taken from the North Adams *Herald*: "Jim", the old buckskin horse owned by the New England Telephone Co., gave his fellow employees a scare yesterday afternoon about 5:30 o'clock. The old horse, who has been with the company so long that the employees consider him one of its most valuable assets, was being driven up High Street hill. The load was rather heavy and the three men were walking and giving the old fellow a lift over the rough places. Finally "Jim" began to back and did not stop until he went over an eighteen foot embankment and landed, wagon atop of him, on the roof of a chicken coop. From there he rolled off the roof between a fence and the side of the coop. The linemen worked feverishly to get the wagon and harness off the old horse and were greatly relieved when they found that he was not injured. Truckmen were sent for and found it necessary to tip the chicken coop over and tear down part of the fence before they could get "Jim" and the wagon out. All the time the men were working, "Jim" lay on his back with his four feet pointing skyward waiting for the men to get him out of his precarious position. He was uninjured save for two small cuts on the breast and the wagon was undamaged aside from a broken shaft. The harness was cut to pieces by the men in their efforts to liberate their "fellow employee."

John T. McLaughlin and Kenneth S. Weeks, of the Engineering Dept., were engaged during Sept., 1912, in making a cable distribution study of the North Adams Exchange.

Tuttle and Bryant Co. had a number D branch exchange of ten stations installed in their new department store in February, 1913.

Topics tells of the Williamstown cut-over: "On Saturday night, June 6, 1914, the telephone central office in Williamstown was removed from the 2nd floor of the Danforth Block to new quarters on the ground floor of the same building. The

new central office will be operated by the Common Battery system. On the new switchboard there will be room for three operators to work at one time. There are now over 500 telephones in Williamstown and about 2,000 calls are handled every day, of which 200 are incoming calls from other exchanges. In 1903 there were 102 telephones in the town and five years later this number had increased to 211, since which time the number has more than doubled."

North Adams was having a Common Battery switchboard installed on the third floor of the new Transcript Building on Bank Street in August, 1914. A force of men under G. R. Martin of the Western Electric Co. was doing the work.

Adams, at the same time, was also having a No. 10 Common Battery system installed by a force of ten men under W. H. Ahl, of the Western Electric Co. The new office was in the Armory Building on Park Street. It was cut over Oct. 3, 1914.

In the fall of 1915, an "automatic" pay station was established on the "Mohawk Trail" on Florida Mt. by Manager Stedman, just 1000 feet above North Adams, but two and one half miles from the central office by road. One Sunday 1446 autos passed that station, a great many stopping.

The Telephone Topics imparts the information that on Aug. 30, 1919, Miss Gertrude A. Walden, Chief Operator at Williamstown, resigned to be married, after eleven years of faithful and conscientious service for the Company. She was succeeded by Miss Agnes N. Hastings, who was promoted from Junior Supervisor.

The Commercial force in the North Adams office in September, 1920, consisted of W. H. Stedman, Manager; George F. Cheney, Commercial Representative; Sadie C. McIntyre, Cashier; Mary D. Mauser, Clerk. G. Murray White was the Wire Chief.

Miss Sadie C. McIntyre, Cashier, soon changed her name. The auspicious event occurred on Nov. 15, 1920, and she has been known since as Mrs. Clyde Carley or Sadie Carley.

The Jan. 1921, Topics reported that Miss Minnie E. Austin had been appointed Chief Operator of the North Adams exchange, to fill the vacancy caused by Mrs. Gatslick's resignation.

“Miss Austin started her telephone career in February, 1907, and by steady application and consistently good work has reached the position of Chief Operator of her exchange. By the way, she is very, very modest, and absolutely refused to have her picture taken for Topics.”

“Mrs. Francis Gatslick, who has been with the Company since 1902, resigned on Nov. 6, 1920. She has filled the position of Chief Operator at North Adams for the last twelve years and has been a most capable and efficient one. Under her guidance the North Adams office always has been at the top.”

The June, 1921, Topics reported the passing of a former telephone girl: “Mrs. David B. Dunham, wife of the Manager at Great Barrington, passed on recently. Mrs. Dunham, formerly Cashier at the North Adams exchange, had been in the employ of the Company for twenty-three years. Entering the Company in September, 1895, she continued in its service until January, 1919, when Mr. Dunham took up his residence in Great Barrington.

“Mrs. Dunham had a very charming personality and was loved and held in the highest estimation by all who knew her.”

On March 30, 1922, the Richmond Hotel suffered a disastrous fire. The alarm was sounded shortly after 11 P.M. and, as usual, the switchboard was flooded with calls. Many operators came back to duty voluntarily, and soon the public was being well cared for. Members of the Plant Dept. gave valuable assistance in furnishing ladders and in doing volunteer work. Miss Minnie Austin, the Chief Operator, was on duty soon after the alarm was sounded and did commendable work at the switchboard.

The Dec., 1922 Topics reported a regrettable retirement:

#### “Sted” Retires

“No man in the telephone business ever retired with more friends than William H. Stedman, who has been more than 43 years in the service of our Company. He retired on Nov. 1, 1922, but is still retained in an advisory capacity at the North Adams office.

“His sound business judgment, his wit and his genial per-

sonality made him an ideal Manager for our Company. Photography is his hobby."

Lovell B. Stowe, formerly District Commercial Manager at Springfield and a great admirer of "Sted," wrote the following for *Topics*: " 'Sted,' as he is affectionately called by everybody, is famed for his quaint wit, his emphatic speech, his resourcefulness, and his many generous and lovable qualities. To recite all his exploits would fill several large books. One amusing and typical incident happened years ago when collection work was largely done by a screw driver. The idea occurred to 'Sted' to send out to subscribers, in arrears, a disconnection notice in a square plain envelope, with a heavy black border. The scheme worked bully. The subscribers were so relieved when they opened their letters and found no one was really dead, that they hustled right down to 'Sted's' office and paid their bills in full, without any hard feeling. His efforts to uplift the Williams College students by a forcible prevention of their use of cigarettes excited much admiration. For original conceptions and unique methods, 'Sted' is hard to beat."

W. S. Knox, who had been acting Manager at Palmer since the death of Manager Chamberlain, was appointed Manager at North Adams. Mr. Knox had a wide experience in the telephone business having served in the Traffic and Commercial Depts. for a number of years.

Miss Ida C. Allard was appointed Chief Operator at Williamstown in March, 1923, succeeding Miss Agnes N. Hastings.

In the Sept., 1923, *Topics*, appeared some interesting news regarding the Savoy exchange: "For more than sixteen years Savoy Center has been the site of the Telephone exchange of that little town, but it is no more. Savoy Hollow now has the honor, with Mr. Kane, the Agent, right on the job giving good service to 62 subscribers served by this little office. In 1907 when the Savoy office was opened it had four lines and 26 subscribers. Everyone enjoyed party line service.

"Today they have a total of 62 subscribers. Mr. Kane has been a very grateful and efficient employee and has received nothing but the best of praise from all of his subscribers. The

old stamping ground of the exchange in Savoy Center was sold by Mr. Kane last month. Both Mr. Kane and the exchange have moved to their new quarters in Savoy Hollow, about two miles from their former location.”

Orator: “And where, I ask you, is Julius Caesar? Where is Attila, the Hun? Where are Moses, Oliver Cromwell, Charlemagne, Hannibal?”

Usher: “Stand up, boys, so the gentleman can see you.” Topics

April, 1925, Topics—“Myrtle Hammond retired March 1st as Chief Operator at Adams, after serving the Company loyally and well for 35 years. Mrs. Hammond’s years of service were spent at the Adams exchange, where in the early days of her employment she was the only operator, and in addition she handled the Commercial work of the office. During this period she has seen the Exchange grow from 50 subscribers to more than 1600.

“On February 26, at the Berkshire Club in North Adams, a banquet was held in honor of the retiring Chief Operator and was attended by more than 50 employees including Ralph E. Jones, District Traffic Manager; Robert D. Fuller, Pittsfield Manager; Harold B. Ranshousen, Manager at Adams and North Adams; William H. Stedman, former Manager at North Adams, and Chief Operators from Pittsfield, Dalton, North Adams and Williamstown. Mrs. Hammond was presented with a mahogany davenport table by her many friends.

“Leona Dupree, who succeeds Mrs. Myrtle Hammond has been employed by the Company for the past twelve years and is regarded as a most capable operator, having worked under Mrs. Hammond’s guidance as Junior Supervisor for the past eight years.”

Robert M. Hodgson was transferred from Manager at Westfield to North Adams as Manager in February, 1926. “Bob” joined the Company July 9, 1923, as a Collector at Greenfield. On July 26, 1924, he was transferred to the Springfield Commercial office for further training; and from there he received his appointment as Manager at Westfield in November, 1924.

Frederick Holden was transferred from Boston to the North Adams office as a Collector in May, 1926.



Charlesworth K. Neilson also became a Collector at the North Adams office in November, 1926.

William H. Stedman, one of the few remaining pioneers of the telephone business, died on April 1, 1927, at North Adams. A long article was written for *Topics* by L. B. Stowe paying tribute to "Sted," most of which has appeared in previous pages.

The following article taken from the August, 1927, *Topics*, will give an idea of an important commercial project: "Word comes from the Western Division that Manager Hodgson of North Adams came through last month with a sales job, selling subscribers on unfilled two-party lines one party service, that we are certainly pleased to hear about: canvassed, 100; sold, 48; increased revenue, \$432; selling percent, 48%. In addition, 21 parties have been regrouped, giving that many additional circuits for new business. Mr. Hodgson was assisted by Mr. Robert Harvie, line assigner."

What is known as the "Vermont Flood" started on Wednesday, Nov. 2, 1927, and *Telephone Topics* describes the effect this inundation had on North Adams:

#### Results of Vermont Flood

"Telephone men in North Adams worked rapidly in restoring local service after the waters had receded from the streets. Of the 5300 telephones in the city, about 4000 were out of service for several hours. The majority of these telephones were working on Sunday, and all were restored to full service on Wednesday.

"Most of the trouble was caused by the breaking of a 400 pair underground cable, crossing a new concrete bridge over the Hoosac River, which was washed away. A temporary cable was suspended with four splices, while it was still raining heavily, and the men stood in water all the time.

"Frank Viens, Testman at North Adams, worked from Thursday night until Sunday night with about eight hours sleep. All the rest of the men worked long hours. Following a preliminary survey of the damage, made by Wire Chief Murray White, work progressed in an orderly way.

"Miss Minnie Austin, Chief Operator, remained in the

office for thirty-one hours, from Thursday noon to Friday night.

“District Manager Ransehausen, unable to return to Pittsfield, worked on the local board from about six o’clock Thursday evening to 8 o’clock Friday morning. Commercial Representative Louis Fontain and several operators worked all night because the high water would not allow them to leave the office.”

Charles H. Bauer was appointed Manager at North Adams in October, 1928, succeeding Robert M. Hodgson. Mr. Bauer joined the Company at Pittsfield Oct. 13, 1924, as a Collector, according to Topics, and became Manager at Great Barrington May 3, 1926. After about a half year in North Adams, “Buckie” reported to the General Sales Manager in Boston.

Margaret B. Phelps, a toll operator at North Adams, entered the employ of the Company in 1921 and made the remarkable record of perfect attendance from that time until 1929. She is well known in the community where she is esteemed both by her business associates and those whom she serves.

Another function occurred, which Topics of April, 1930, described: “On March 4th, a dinner and sales meeting was held by the North Adams local plant forces. Following a steak dinner, Wire Chief Murray White acted as toastmaster, and talks were made by General Sales Manager Richard S. Whitcomb, District Plant Chief George Wright, District Commercial Manager Robert D. Fuller, District Traffic Manager David H. Hall and Manager Carrol S. Parker. Good food, good talks, good music and a good time.”

## CHAPTER 17

### *Great Barrington Exchange Area*

THE telephone service at Great Barrington was commended highly by the *Berkshire Courier* soon after the organization of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company: "The telephonic service by which the returns of Tuesday's elections was received, and given to the public through the *Courier* office, was admirable, both in conduct and results, and we desire to make due acknowledgments to C. G. Tompkins, Supt. of the Berkshire circuit and Mrs. Newman, his very capable and obliging Assistant, and to George F. Upham and Miss Callie Gallup, of the Great Barrington central office, for their successful efforts to serve both ourselves and the public as faithfully and promptly as they did on Tuesday afternoon and evening."

The *Courier* continued to express its wonder of the telephone: The *Courier* office has been in successful communication for business and social purposes, during the past week, with Springfield, Holyoke, Albany, and Hudson, the conversations, in every instance, being so well maintained as to be able to recognize the voice of the person with whom it was being held. It almost takes one's breath away to think of this marvel of marvels, and as we witness the wonderful achievements of the telephone, we are led to ask, "What next?" A pertinent question to ask and the breath may well come slowly while waiting for an answer.

The Lee exchange is mentioned in the *Republican* of April 15, 1884: "The telephone office will be moved this week to Baird and Benton's Block. There are now over 60 subscribers

and the line will soon be extended to the creamery on the Tyringham road.”

Some time or other F. R. Tucker became Manager of the Lee exchange.

Dec. 31, 1884, *Courier*—New Marlboro, Mill River, Hartsville and Monterey are getting ready to shout “Hello” to one another and to their neighbors. The poles are being got ready for the new line, and Landlord Tuttle, of New Marlboro, is stirring vigorously in the matter, with the prospect of having the line in speaking connection at an early day.

Dec. 31, 1884, *Courier*—The New England Telephone Co. and the Connecticut Telephone Co. have finally come together and have joined wires between Sheffield and Ashley Falls, and last Friday conversation was carried on between Pittsfield and Hartford. This extension will be of a great accommodation to quite a number in this vicinity, and establishes a trunk line through this State and Connecticut and in the near future we shall probably be in direct communication with New York.

Topics spoke of James H. Barry being appointed Manager at Great Barrington in 1886. He had started as an Inspector in the Pittsfield exchange but was called back to his native town.

It wasn't long before Edward S. Felter took Mr. Barry's place as Manager at Great Barrington, and Mr. Barry continued his telephone career nearer the “Hub.”

In March, 1894, the *Courier* announced that a competing company was being organized,—The Mutual Telephone Exchange Company of Great Barrington. It was planned later to have connection in every town in South Berkshire, with a trunk line through the county. The promoters were confident that they could introduce a better system than the one now in use, and at a greatly reduced cost. The use of copper metallic circuits, aerial cables, and the elimination of the battery were the chief factors. The officers of the Company were: President, Henry W. Pope, of New York; Treasurer, E. S. Robeson; Secretary, Leslie Lupton, both of Rahway, N. J.

Canvassing was thoroughly done by E. F. Choate, a New York gentleman, and much of the \$5,000 capital sold was taken by local parties. The switchboard will be on the second

floor of the Whiting building. J. R. Cowan had charge of the construction of the exchange.

The May 10, 1894, *Courier* reported the New England Company was placing solid-back long distance transmitters (a new style using granular carbon) in all the pay stations in Monterey, New Marlboro, Sheffield and Housatonic; and one will be established in the South Egremont post office, and a summer pay station at the Mount Everett House. The New Marlboro Inn is to have a long distance instrument, and J. P. Schunder & Co., of this town, to have a Blake transmitter. The total number of instruments in use is 59, the greatest number in the exchange's history.

The *Courier* reported that the Mutual Telephone Co. will be under the management of the recently organized electrical firm of Evans & Whitwell and will pass under their control on its completion.

D. P. Healey, for some time employed in the local office, has accepted a position as Inspector in Burlington, Vt.

The *Courier* announced that the new telephone exchange was put in operation June 25, 1894, and was in full working order. Miss Sadie Whitwell was the day operator. The magneto switchboard was the invention of H. M. Pope.

Morris Jones was appointed Chief Operator of the Great Barrington exchange. His sister, Miss Fanny Jones, and Birdie Almonte were his assistants.

The Mutual Telephone Co. found it necessary to substitute cables for the copper wires that were first strung about the town, and the change, according to the *Courier*, will make the local exchange one of the best equipped in the state. A list of Mutual's subscribers was given, which numbered about forty-five.

The Nov. 29, 1894, *Courier* reported that Pittsfield had a new telephone and telegraph company, similar to the Mutual Company in this town.

April 25, 1895, the *Courier* stated that the New England Company made a further reduction of \$9 per year on telephones on grounded lines in the Great Barrington exchange, and L. C. Raifstanger was canvassing for new subscribers. It was thought that a line would be run to Alford.

May 2, 1895, the *Courier* said that the Mutual Company has replaced its magneto instruments with improved battery telephones that are giving very good satisfaction.

On October 1, 1895, the New England Company opened an exchange at Stockbridge. Regular subscribers at Great Barrington were allowed free service, until further notice, with subscribers of the Stockbridge exchange (public stations excepted) in place of free service with the Lee exchange, which has been discontinued.

It was a surprise to read in the February 27, 1896, *Courier* that there was a well-founded rumor afloat that the Mutual Telephone Co. would be controlled by the New England Company, and that the negotiations would probably be far enough along by next week to be made public.

#### EXIT THE MUTUAL TELEPHONE

March 5, 1896, *Courier*—Last Friday all the property formerly belonging to the Mutual Telephone Company and owned by H. J. Mignerey, was sold to the New England Telephone Co. The work has been begun of removing the wires, etc., which, with the instruments, will be shipped to Boston.

Mr. Mignerey states that it was his intention when he bought the property to continue the business, and at that time he had no idea of selling to the old company. This step leaves the field entirely to the New England Company. (Mr. Mignerey's name appeared quite often in connection with business transactions.)

The New England Co. now felt it could spend some money in rewiring the town: A pole line will be established at the north end and will run down Main Street. The wires will be removed from the trees. New pole lines will be established on all of the important streets, and the wires will reenter the exchange in cables. It is expected that the service will be improved by the new arrangement.

The telephone office was moved to the Berkshire Building early in March, 1899, where it enjoyed the company of the post office, telegraph, and a stock broker's office. Conversation was interrupted for but 40 minutes. Seventy-five

wires had to be connected and tested before the exchange was in working order.

July 17, 1902, the *Courier* reported: The New England Telephone Co. are fixing up their new quarters in the new Berkshire Block and E. S. Felter, the Manager, hopes to move in by August 1st. Their men have been stretching a special line to Housatonic and changing local wires.

July 31, 1902, *Courier*: The New England Telephone Co. has stretched through the village a large single lead cable containing 60 wires. This will do away with the net work of 30 small wires and two cross arms being placed on the new poles. The telephones on the east side of Main Street will now be connected from a cable at the rear of the blocks on that side of the streets.

There were numerous items in the *Courier* telling of the car barn being built on Park Street and the construction of the Berkshire Street Railway. The long awaited event arrived and was a gala affair. The Company's first passenger-carrying car arrived from Pittsfield Nov. 19, 1902, passing the *Courier* office on Main Street at 2:43 P.M.

About 1905 the Company installed a small switchboard in Housatonic, in the Lennon's Drug Store, now the Housatonic Pharmacy.

Mary Tracy joined the Company March 18, 1906, as an Operator, and contributed to the success of the Lee exchange.

The Telephone Topics made its debut in May, 1907, which filled a long felt need.

The Stockbridge Exchange was equipped with a three position magneto switchboard by the Construction Dept. in July, 1907, according to Topics.

Aug., 1907, Topics—The Lee Exchange has recently moved the Central Office to larger and better quarters on Main Street, and a six position magneto switchboard has been installed. At the rear of the switchboard are placed the latest wool tip cables; also, an iron frame for protectors, etc. Switchboard men consider this exchange the best equipped magneto exchange the Company has at the present time.

Mary A. Boudrow has lately been promoted to the position

of Chief Operator of the Lee Exchange, and Janet A. Voght was appointed bookkeeper and pay station attendant.

N. J. DeNault, from Springfield, took the position of Combination man at Lee, and T. S. Hayden, of the Construction Dept., was equipping a new Pay Station desk at the Lee office, according to the Oct., 1907, Topics.

It seems a Class F exchange had been started in Tyringham; but in January, 1908, it was abolished, the 30 subscribers being connected on two fifteen party lines with the Lee Exchange.

About 1908 the Company established a Class F, or Agency Office, in Housatonic, Mrs. Ella Rathbun being appointed the first Agent. In a couple of years, she moved from Meadow Street to Cottage Street. In a few months she went to Waterbury to live, and Alice L. Tillinghast, Mrs. Rathbun's niece, assumed the duties for nearly a year.

The Topics of January, 1909, bade adieu to Mr. and Mrs. Felter: Edward S. Felter, for many years Manager at Great Barrington, has resigned his position, and the Commercial Dept. of that place has been combined with Lee, Stockbridge and Housatonic under Manager F. P. Tucker of Lee, who will hereafter reside at Great Barrington. Mr. Felter has taken a position with the Southern New England Telephone Co. at Bridgeport, as Contract Agent.

The Lee office took over the handling of the Stockbridge toll business in June, 1909.

A new 40 line No. 1 PBX was installed at the Aspinwall Hotel, Lenox, with Miss May F. Purcell of Pittsfield as branch exchange operator. This fine summer hotel was later destroyed by fire.

Mr. Henry Levy, solicitor at Great Barrington, was transferred to the Plymouth Exchange about August,—in time for the bathing season.

Oct., 1909, Topics announced that William Brooks was making a canvass for new subscribers at Sheffield with the intention of opening a Class F exchange there.

The canvass was evidently successful, for the November Topics reported that work had begun on the Sheffield Exchange, 90 new subscribers having been obtained and that the



Central Office would be located in the second floor of the building occupied by A. M. Little & Co.

Feb., 1910, Topics—Sheffield Exchange Opened

The new exchange at Sheffield was formally opened Saturday, Jan. 15, 1910, with 100 subscribers. After the official cutover, a dinner was served to guests of the Telephone Company at the Misses Andrews. The list of invited guests included: H. E. Hughes, District Manager; C. L. Vaughn, Dist. Plant Chief; J. F. Burns, Dist. Traffic Chief; F. P. Tucker, Manager; A. S. Page, Central Office Equipment; W. P. Durant, Wire Chief; F. H. Holliday, Dist. Foreman; C. W. Gassett, Foreman; J. W. Shelly, Special Agent; K. H. Chase, Distribution Engineer; J. W. Forssen, Division Foreman of Equipment; J. K. Curtis, Special Agent; H. L. Jones, Division Distribution Engineer; H. S. Chapin, E. W. Bartholomew, and Frank Stall, Selectmen of Sheffield; A. H. Tuttle, Tree Warden; H. C. Clark, Town Clerk; W. D. French, A. M. Little, Eugene Scott, Jr., of the *Pittsfield Eagle*; M. F. Lester, Charles McCarthy of the *Pittsfield Journal*, and John M. Flynn of the *Berkshire Courier*.

Speeches were made after the dinner by representatives of the Telephone Company and by the townspeople present, Mr. Vaughn acting as toastmaster.

A 100 line village board was installed with the following new outside construction: 1300 chestnut poles, 10,450 feet of aerial cable, 34 miles of No. 12 iron pole line circuit, which supply Sheffield with an excellent equipment for giving good telephone service.

William J. Dunn, of the Plant Dept., has been transferred from Stockbridge to Lee, and H. Trudeau was transferred to the Plant Dept. in Pittsfield.

Aug., 1910, Topics—Owing to the rapid growth of business in the Pittsfield section of the Pittsfield District, George W. Fahey has been appointed Wire Chief in the Great Barrington territory to relieve Wire Chief Durant.

The following sports item appeared in the Nov., 1910, Topics: "The employees of the Plant Dept. at Great Barrington have organized a basket ball team with Wire Chief Fahey

as Captain and Manager F. P. Tucker as Manager. Games will be arranged with teams at North Adams and Pittsfield.”

Mrs. Alice C. Tillinghast took over the Housatonic Agency the latter part of 1910. She was the sister of the first Agent, Mrs. Rathbun, and the mother of Alice L. Tillinghast, the previous one. She occupied the house on Cottage Street, where the switchboard was in the sitting room. The operating was done by Mrs. Tillinghast and her younger daughter, Edith, who proved themselves very competent operators, and well appreciated by the 50 subscribers.

Raymond D. Seeley joined the Company in 1911, at Great Barrington. He went to work as a Groundman in a construction gang, and soon got to climbing poles. He later became an Installer and Repairman.

A new farmers' line was constructed between Great Barrington and Monterey, with eight new subscribers in the latter place. This opened a territory to Great Barrington that heretofore it was only able to reach through one pay station, located at the Langdon Store Co.

Oct., 1911, Topics—The Great Barrington Exchange had a telephone exhibit in charge of Contract Agent H. C. Boardman, at the annual Fair of the Housatonic Agricultural Society held September 26th to 29th at Great Barrington. Advertising matter was distributed and contracts taken.

C. S. Quinn of the Commerical Engineers office at Boston, is making a survey of the Great Barrington, Sheffield and Housatonic Exchanges to determine the future growth of lines and telephones, by small sections. These long term estimates, about 20 years, are used by the Fundamental Plan Engineers to figure the proper places to locate central offices, the size of the buildings and the conduit layout.

In the fall of 1911, considerable new work at Great Barrington occurred. The pole line between Great Barrington and Monterey was rebuilt, a new pole line from New Marlboro to Southfield, new aerial cable, 23,285 feet, between Great Barrington and South Egrimont which gave additional circuits in that locality and did away with open wires. Foreman Duxbury, with a large force of men, was in charge of the work.

Miss Josie Malumphy, who was acting Chief Operator temporarily at Manchester, Vermont, returned to the Great Barrington Exchange, where she is Chief Operator, and Miss Julia F. Killfoile, of Stockbridge, took charge of the Manchester Exchange.

Dec., 1911, Topics reported that underground cable was being placed on Housatonic Street, at Lee, and, at its completion, the heavy pole line on this street would be abolished.

In March, 1912, the following was reported: "Louis Budrow, of the Springfield Cable Dept., is at Great Barrington splicing cable on Maple Street. Horace E. Roby, Traffic Inspector, has been making service tests at Great Barrington. Thomas Cleary and W. E. Fahey have taken positions in the Plant Dept. at Great Barrington. A supervisor's turret has been installed for traffic observances."

April, 1912, Topics—Work has been started by the Western Electric Company on the new switchboard at Great Barrington, and the Commercial Dept. will move into new quarters on the ground floor of the Post Office building. This Commercial Office is to be a joint office for the Western Union Telegraph Co. after June 1st. The office is centrally located on the Main Street, and newly equipped with office furniture and is an excellent addition to the new commercial offices now being opened in other cities.

The chief event, however, happened about two months later. "The Great Barrington Exchange was "cut over" to Common Battery on July 20, 1912, without a hitch. The old magneto switchboard was left behind in the Berkshire Block. The board is the No. 10 type and was installed in a most excellent manner by the Western Electric Co. under Foreman Rooney. Miss Bessie Dovey has taken the position of Western Union Clerk in the No. 10 commercial office at Great Barrington."

The passing of the "night boy" occurred soon afterwards—being replaced by two lady operators, Miss Mae Wells of Great Barrington on full time and Miss Mary Flynn of Canaan, Conn., on half time.

As if to celebrate the installation of the latest type switchboard, the telephone "stars," made up of Plant men, led in a

four-team baseball league in the town. Also, all the female employees of the Exchange were given tickets to the fair grounds and grand-stand by the secretary of the Housatonic Agricultural Society, as an appreciation of good service rendered to the Society.

A story about the agricultural business appeared in *Topics*: A salesman sold an old colored farmer a tractor. A few days after the machine was delivered, the salesman called on his customer for pay:

“Can you pay me for the tractor, Uncle Jim?”

“Pay fo’ de tractor?” he asked in astonishment and wrath. “Why man, yo’ done tole me dat in free weeks de tractor would pay fo’ hisself.”

In March, 1913, *Topics* reported—“Mr. A. M. Little, Sheffield Class F Agent, is erecting a new building which is fast nearing completion. When completed the Central Office will be moved into the larger quarters, modern in every way. The old building was recently damaged by fire.”

It is with regret that the following item in *Topics* was read: “After a very short illness, Mary A. Budrow, Chief Operator at Lee, passed away Feb. 8, 1914. The sudden termination of her life ended a promising career which started December, 1903, when she became a student operator. She was steadily promoted, being made Chief Operator on April 21, 1907, and in December, 1911, she also was given charge of the Stockbridge and Otis Exchanges. She had been offered the position of Chief Operator of one of the large offices, but owing to the condition of her health, she felt it advisable to decline. The Pittsfield District loses a most efficient Chief and the Company, an earnest worker and loyal employee.

“Four other members of her family are in the employ of the Company: William A., Head Installer at Pittsfield; Louis H., Cable Splicer; Stephen D., Lineman; and Lillian H., an Operator at Lee.”

In Jan., 1914, a new 100-line village board was installed at Otis, replacing the 20-line wall board partially destroyed by fire some time ago. The new equipment improved the service

greatly and many favorable comments were given by subscribers.

The West Stockbridge Exchange was purchased from the State Line Telephone Company on Oct. 1, 1915.

Robert D. Fuller was appointed Manager at Great Barrington in March, 1916. "Bob" was first employed March 17, 1912, in Worcester as Contract Agent, and was made Collector there in April, 1914. "Bob's" varied experiences, while Manager in Great Barrington, were terminated in early 1918 by his joining the army in the First World War.

April, 1918, Topics introduced the next Manager: "Manager John F. Shaw, recently appointed in charge of Great Barrington, has always been a Commercial man in our Company. He began work in 1916 as a Collector, Adjuster, and general all-round Commercial man at Worcester. Commercial problems have no terrors for him in his new job. His favorite sport is hunting—just what, he doesn't say,—but perhaps it will be for subscribers after a final bill has been rendered."

Topics reported a Commercial change: "David B. Dunham has been appointed Manager at Great Barrington, succeeding John F. Shaw, who has been transferred to Westfield. The change was effective Dec. 28, 1918.

"Mr. Dunham became a Collector at North Adams in October, 1907. When the practice of collecting was abolished, he became a Contract Agent and subsequently worked on special collections, pay-station work, toll development, obsolete service, and other special work."

On September 21, Miss Julia F. Killfoile, Chief Operator at Stockbridge, resigned to be married. Miss Killfoile had been in the employ of the Company since 1907, and the twelve years of service always found her loyal and faithful.

"The Snobinses claim to be connected with some of the best families in town."

"Yes, I understand they've just put in a telephone."

Miss Katherine G. Finn was given the position of Chief Operator of the Stockbridge Exchange in place of Miss Killfoile.

About 1919 the Housatonic Central Office was moved to the

corner of Main and Pleasant Streets. Here a separate room was available for the switchboard.

In November, 1920, W. F. Crittendon, Agent at Otis, received compliments for the ingenuity shown in restoring a shattered pole.

Feb., 1924, Topics—Harold B. Ranshousen was appointed Manager at Great Barrington Dec. 31, 1923, succeeding David B. Dunham who is on a six months leave of absence in California.

Mr. Ranshousen entered the employ of the Company on Oct. 23, 1911, as a Collector at Pittsfield. He was engaged in canvassing work at North Adams from May 6 to Sept. 4, 1912, and then for a short period at Greenfield, after which he returned to Pittsfield.

After serving in the war, he was re-employed at Pittsfield as Commercial Representative on June 2, 1919. He has been very successful in lecture work, having given many talks before different bodies in the Pittsfield area. Recently he has substituted as Manager at Great Barrington, Palmer, and Westfield.

Frank D. Henderson was appointed Wire Chief at Great Barrington in 1924. He worked his way up from Night Operator at Athol, where he started in April, 1912, becoming Installer, Class "A" Testman, and then was called to the Division Staff at Springfield. He was Wire Chief at Greenfield before coming to Great Barrington.

April, 1924, Topics—Mrs. Tillinghast Awarded Vail Medal.

Mrs. C. S. Tillinghast is what is known as Class F Agent at Housatonic, a little town in Western Massachusetts. In other words, she's pretty nearly "the whole works." She runs the telephone business of the town by arrangement with the Company, and sees that service is ready day or night.

Shortly before 1 o'clock in the morning of April 21, 1923, Mrs. Tillinghast was awakened by the cry of "Fire" by someone outside. Diagonally across the street from her house she saw a large wooden general store and residential block in flames. She realized that this danger threatened not only her own home, but the entire heart of the village, including some mills. She called the members of the local volunteer hose company, other town officials and the mill watchmen so that

the mill fire departments might bring to the scene the available mill hose and start the mill water pumps.

Noticing the headway the fire was gaining and realizing that outside help would also be needed, she notified the fire departments of Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox and Pittsfield, all of which responded with detachments of fire fighters and powerful fire fighting apparatus.

The fire destroyed the general store building and six houses and would have swept the town but for the arrival of the outside help, called by Mrs. Tillinghast.

She remained at her post until the fire had burned the outside cables and had completely cut off communication for the time being. The heat was so intense and the sparks so numerous that the roof of her own house caught fire and was saved from complete destruction only by the efforts of her husband and son, who operated the office fire extinguisher.

When the switchboard "went dead" and she could no longer operate it, then, and not until then, did Mrs. Tillinghast leave her post, taking with her the office records and other office property of the Company.

The presentation by Vice President Driver, Chairman of the Company's Vail Medal Committee of Award, was accompanied by a silver medal and a check for \$250. The presentation was informal in character and took place in the sitting room of Mrs. Tillinghast's home. Among those present were her husband, son, sister and a score or so of her friends and neighbors, among them, Manager Ranshousen and Wire Chief Henderson of Great Barrington.

Mrs. Tillinghast retired in September, 1942, after 32 years of service. The Company conferred the Agency upon her daughter, Mrs. Edith T. Gregory, who had worked at the board since her mother took the Agency, and who continued to carry on the traditions of the family. The Company inaugurated Dial service in Housatonic, March 27, 1957, which marked the end of the Central Office Magneto-switchboards in Mass.

Nov., 1925, saw Byron K. Way come to Great Barrington as Manager. "Ken" joined the Company in June, 1923. He worked a short time in the Accounting and Engineering

Departments and then took a course of training in the Central Division. In January, 1924, he was assigned to the Manager's staff at Springfield. After a brief stay, "Ken" was transferred to Newport, Rhode Island, as Manager.

Charles H. Bauer was then appointed Manager of the Great Barrington Area May 3, 1926. "Bucky" was a native of Pittsfield and was inducted into the telephone business on Oct. 13, 1924. He served as Collector, at Pittsfield, and soon rose to Commercial Representative. "Bucky" earned quite a name in Pittsfield as a salesman.

In September, 1926, Frank D. Henderson was transferred from Wire Chief at Great Barrington to Wire Chief at Pittsfield.

Raymond R. Snow was promoted from the Methods Department to Wire Chief at Great Barrington, when Mr. Henderson moved to Pittsfield, according to Topics. "Ray" received his training in Worcester and Springfield, where he made his reputation in the Telephone Company Bowling League. In Great Barrington he captained a team of bowlers known as "The Snowballs" and in the winter of 1927 "Ray's" team topped the list and was given a banquet at a local hostelry. They presented him a medal proclaiming his prowess.

Charles H. Bauer was transferred from Manager at Great Barrington to Manager at North Adams on Oct. 1, 1928, succeeding Robert M. Hodgson.

Carroll S. Parker was appointed Manager at Great Barrington, taking Mr. Bauer's place. He was formerly a Commercial Representative at Springfield.

In October, 1929, John M. Dick succeeded C. S. Parker as Manager at Great Barrington. "Jack" joined the Company in October, 1925, his first assignment being that of Collector in Greenfield. Early the following year he was transferred to a similar position in Pittsfield and later in the same year was made Commercial Representative. Then followed similar service in Burlington, Vermont, and in Worcester.



## CHAPTER 18

### *Greenfield Exchange Area*

SOON after the organization of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. on Oct. 19, 1883, the Greenfield Telephone Exchange became a part of the Northern Division with headquarters at Greenfield, under the charge of J. B. Hunt. The Northern Division included Northern Worcester County and Franklin County in Massachusetts, and the states of Vermont and New Hampshire (excepting Nashua and Concord, which went into the Worcester Division). There were 22 exchanges with about 1600 subscribers, according to the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*. Frank E. Bowker was appointed local Manager of the Greenfield exchange. On Nov. 15, 1883, a new telephone directory contained the names of about 75 Greenfield subscribers.

Owing to the increasing business, the Company was obliged to put in another switchboard, and to "stretch" an extra wire to Turners Falls. It was also announced on Dec. 31, 1883, that the Exchange would hereafter keep open all day on Sunday.

Heath was mentioned in the *Republican* of Nov. 19, 1883, as being a likely prospect for a telephone extension, but the terms probably seemed disproportionate to their needs. The requirements were that Heath shall furnish and set 128 poles between Adamsville, in Coleraine, and the "city" (Shelburne Falls), a distance of seven miles, and guarantee the sum of \$40.00 yearly per subscriber. The Company was to wire the poles and furnish the office,—a telephone in a store for the use of the public.

At the same time, the *Republican* held out hope for the

benefits of the telephone to other communities: "A telephone line from Shelburne Falls to Charlemont village will probably be in working order soon and one from "Slab City" in Rowe to the Zoar Depot at Charlemont is under consideration."

It was increasingly evident that Shelburne Falls was becoming a telephone center for that scenic section between Greenfield and North Adams, and it is not surprising to read in the *Republican* of May 27, 1884, plans for an exchange there: "The increase in the telephone business has necessitated the fitting up of two rooms over Jenk's Shoe Store for the office, which will require the attendance of a day and a night operator. New posts have been put up in the streets to accommodate the increasing number of wires."

The opening of the Shelburne Falls Exchange was described in the *Gazette and Courier* of June 2, 1884: "On the second floor of G. W. Jenk's Store, rear room, the New England Telephone Co. has placed its apparatus and made everything pleasant for those who wish to communicate by 'word of mouth,' and where the listening ear can receive full satisfaction. Master Charles Jenks has the charge. He is a very correct, gentlemanly operator. The office is kept open day and night."

An item in the *Republican* of Oct. 7, 1884, indicated that Heath was still in a lonely condition, but, like "Barkus," it was willing: "There is a prospect that the telephone will be extended from the 'grist-mill' station, near the Coleraine cemetery, to Adamsville (about three miles west of Coleraine) and the Heath line. Arrangements are being made to string the wires from Heath Center to the Coleraine line and thus secure to Heath telephone communication with the outside world."

Four linemen, who were working near Greenfield in 1888 on what was known later as the Barre Plains and Troy line, were mentioned in a later Topics: "These blazers of trails were George Lester, who later drove an iron horse on the B. & M. R.R. for many years; Alexander Proctor, who became the trusted Manager of the Northampton Exchange; Patrick Butler, one of the best linemen who ever wore spurs and who was also quite 'handy with his dukes' in case of trouble; Herbert or 'Bud' Robbins, who later held forth in the storeroom at Burlington, Vermont."

Manager Bowker was transferred to Fitchburg the latter part of 1889.

Wallace A. Parker was the first of the four Parker brothers to enter the telephone service in Greenfield. He started with the usual job of Night Operator in May, 1890, when J. F. Hyland was Manager. In 1893 he went to Fitchburg as a combination worker under Frank Bowker.

George F. Parker went to work for the company at Greenfield in 1891. He also started as Night Operator and his pay was 50 cents a night. He continued in the Plant Dept. in various capacities.

"Sam" Parker, the third brother, started his telephone career in March, 1891, as Manager at Greenfield and later made his mark in the Traffic Dept.

Clement Parker did not get started until the summer of 1900. "Clem" followed the example of two of his brothers by becoming a Night Operator. That fall he got a chance to join the Construction Dept. as a Timekeeper for N. J. Fleming, Foreman. Telephone Topics recounts that in his early career as a cableman his boss was none other than his brother Wallace. They say "Clem" always worked hard and faithfully, until he heard that "Wally" was coming to inspect the job. Then he would invariably drop his tools, run towards the boss and demand a raise in pay. "Wally" would return a cold stare and comment that he was already getting more than he was worth. "Clem" would then return to the job and the fun was over until "Wally's" next visit.

A sister of the Parker brothers also was an Operator in the Greenfield Exchange for a number of years, and another sister was a Western Union Telegraph Operator.

Frank Bonneville's service with the Company began in 1895 under Manager Samuel Parker, when the Greenfield telephone quarters were in the Pond Block.

Frank E. Bowker returned to Greenfield when Manager Sam Parker was transferred.

In 1899 Manager F. E. Bowker left Greenfield to take up the installation of a switchboard in Keene, N.H., of a type with which but few of our present employees are familiar, according to Topics. It was commonly termed the "Williams Bar

Switch" and the operator depended upon extension bells as line signals.

Harold E. Hughes, Manager of the Holyoke Exchange, was transferred to Greenfield to take Mr. Bowker's place.

In 1899 Harry E. Oakes came to Greenfield to be Night Operator and do some collecting during the day. Harry's telephone career began at Orange in 1894, as Relief Operator, and in two years he received his first promotion—Night Operator.

Elwin A. (Tommy) Coates started his long telephone career in November, 1899, working for the Plant Dept.

Leslie H. Streeter was employed by the Company Sept. 26, 1901, and went to work for Manager Harold E. Hughes at Greenfield as an Installer.

It was reported by the *Recorder-Gazette* that the Deerfield Valley Telephone Co. was organized in 1906, being financed and controlled by the New England Telephone Co. The New England Co. transferred to the Deerfield Valley Co. its Shelburne Falls, Conway, and Ashfield Exchanges on May 2, 1906, and on January 28, 1907, its Colrain Exchange.

A *Republican* item of Aug. 21 1905, gives the following: "The New England Telephone Co. has continuous service at Conway now, an Operator being in attendance day and night, Sundays and holidays. Fourteen new subscribers have been added in Conway. At Greenfield, Manager Sherry Baldwin announces that 57 new instruments have been installed. There has been a steady growth locally and in various parts of the county since Mr. Baldwin became Manager."

Frank Bonneville was transferred from Lowell to Greenfield in 1907, when Sherry Baldwin was local Manager. Frank started in Greenfield in 1895 and in 1897 went to work in the Springfield Maintenance Dept. and then took a try in several cities of the Southern New England territory, finally winding up with the New York–New Jersey Telephone Co. in 1905. He then returned to the New England Company at Lowell in 1906.

The Telephone Topics, which made its bow to the employees in May, 1907, contained two Greenfield items in its September, 1907, issue: "Considerable underground con-

duits are being installed in Greenfield under the supervision of Foreman Jack De Coursey, in preparation for the new Exchange, which will probably be cut over early in 1908. Greenfield now has over 1,000 subscribers and business looks good for the balance of the year."

"Charles H. Lawrence, who has been connected with the Greenfield Exchange for the past 8 years, has been made foreman of the loop team and will have charge of light construction and repair work in the Greenfield District. Leslie H. Streeter succeeds him on trunk line work."

The Topics of Oct., 1907, reports that recent issues of the *Gazette and Recorder* have had excellent write ups of the new Central Office and also refer to the efficient management of Manager Baldwin and his assistants.

March, 1908, Topics—A very pretty invitation party was given in Grinnell Hall, Greenfield, Thursday evening, February 20, under the auspices of the Operators of the Greenfield Exchange. The hall was very prettily decorated with potted plants, bunting and blue bells. The patronesses, Mrs. Wm. P. Gorey, Miss E. M. O'Keefe and Miss Lydia Triebel, received the guests under an arch of evergreens. The floor was in charge of E. F. Shay, assisted by Miss Katherine Grogan, Miss Katherine Woodlock, Miss Mary Slagenhauf, Miss Abbie Sullivan, Miss Irene Pfefferle and Miss Florence Worthley. Music was furnished by Allen's orchestra.

#### June, 1908, Topics—Greenfield's New Building

The Greenfield Exchange was cut over to a Common Battery system on the night of May 23rd. The operators had been well trained, and service went on uninterruptedly. A large number of Greenfield business men gathered at the Exchange and were much interested in the proceedings.

The new Exchange is in the new building on School Street, just completed for the Company. The main floor contains, first, the Manager's office, with quarters for the Pay Station, attendant, and bookkeeper. Adjoining this are retiring rooms and operating rooms, all with room for any reasonable growth for fifteen years. The switchboard equipment comprises a No. 10 local of six positions, and a No. 1 toll of 12 positions, Chief Operator's desk, etc.

The work of installing the Greenfield plant has been under the direct supervision of Foreman E. J. Ames, of the General Construction Dept. Mr. Ames has had a competent force of help, and has rigidly insisted upon their living up to his motto, "Do it well."

Engineer Nicholson and Assistant Osborne made the test of the apparatus. Division Chief Operator, Samuel F. Parker, and Charles M. Bigelow of the Traffic Dept., instructed the operating force and looked after the details of their part of the change.

Leslie D. Fisher was appointed night operator and combinationman of the South Deerfield Exchange in May, 1908, in place of Charles H. Sabin, resigned.

A telephone romance was announced in Topics: "Miss May Rose Harrington, who has been employed in the Greenfield Exchange for several years as Cashier, resigned May 31, 1908. Miss Harrington and Eugene S. Henderson, Test-man at the Greenfield Exchange, were married June 10, 1908. The hearty good wishes of the entire District are extended to the happy pair."

August 1, 1908, there occurred the Operating Reorganization, by which three departments were established,—Commercial, Plant and Traffic. The following appointments were made in the Greenfield District: F. P. Langmaid, District Manager; W. T. Durfee, District Plant Chief; S. F. Parker, District Traffic Chief.

Frederic P. Langmaid also took upon himself the management of the Greenfield Exchange, when Sherry Baldwin went to Vermont in December, 1908. Mr. Langmaid started his telephone career as messenger boy in 1888 and progressed to Night Operator, Travelling Inspector and finally Manager at Beverly, Concord, N.H., and Holyoke.

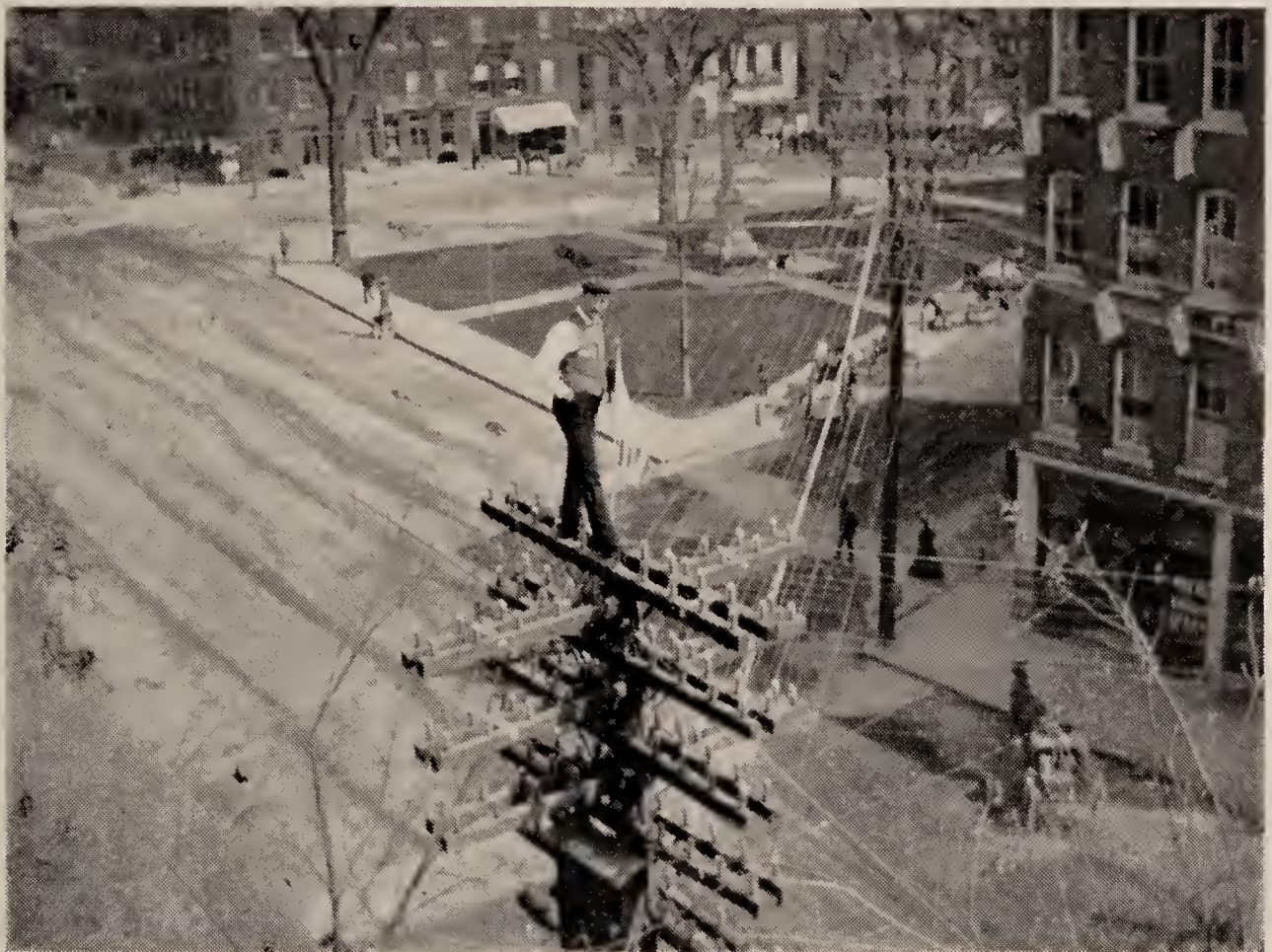
Harry A. Noyes was appointed Chief Clerk to W. T. Durfee, District Plant Chief, Aug. 1, 1908. Harry joined the Company in December, 1900, as Timekeeper and Stock Clerk and then became a Special Contract Agent in New Hampshire.

Nov., 1908, Topics—V. K. Redman has been appointed Auditor's Chief Clerk and will have charge of the Accounting Office located in Greenfield. Mr. Redman has assumed his new



FIRST THREE GREENFIELD DISTRICT DEPARTMENT HEADS—AUG. 1, 1908.

*Left to right:* W. T. Durfee, Plant Chief; F. P. Langmaid, Manager; S. F. Parker, Traffic Chief.



WIRES CONVERGING AT THE GREENFIELD OFFICE IN 1895. FRANK WYATT HAS PLACED A FLAG AT THE TOP OF THE POLE!





duties and the books for the Greenfield Exchange District have been taken over by him. In transferring the bookkeeping of the Greenfield Exchange District to the Accounting Office, Miss Annie C. Collins and Gladys M. Woodbury were transferred from the Commercial Dept.

Miss Lydia E. Triebel, for eight years an employee of the Operating Dept., during the last four of which she has filled the position of Assistant Chief Operator, has accepted a position with the Traffic Dept. as Toll Service Observer at Greenfield. Miss Mabel Yetter, a Toll Operator for the past five years, has been promoted to the position of Assistant Chief Operator in place of Miss Triebel.

Dec., 1908, Topics—Miss Florence A. Hosford, Cashier at Greenfield, has been appointed District Cashier of the Greenfield District.

E. W. Beckwith, District Engineer from the Springfield office, is finally located in his new quarters at Greenfield.

George Wright was given the position of District Switchboardman at Greenfield in 1908. George first started in 1901 as Night Operator in the Haymarket Exchange, Boston, and then transferred to the Equipment Dept.

Miss Mary Collins, formerly an operator in the Springfield Exchange, and for the last three years in South Deerfield, was appointed Chief Operator of the South Deerfield Exchange.

Sherry W. Baldwin, Manager at Greenfield, was transferred to Bellows Falls as Manager in place of Harry Gray, in December, 1908.

Edward E. Mellen was appointed Chief Clerk to District Manager Langmaid on Dec. 9, 1908. He entered the employ of the Company in the Pittsfield office as a Collector, Nov. 2, 1908, only a month and one week prior to his promotion.

Miss Myrtle E. Rhoades succeeded Miss Florence A. Hosford as District Cashier of the Greenfield District in April, 1909. Miss Rhoades was formerly Clerk in the Commercial Dept. at Northampton.

Sales activities resulted in a contract being taken for a No. 2 PBX of 8 stations for the new Franklin County Hospital in Greenfield. Also the PBX at the Stanley G. I. Co. was to be replaced by a two-position board carrying 150 stations. The

Hotel Weldon added 11 stations, making a total of 46 stations.

The May, 1909, Topics listed the following Exchanges and Managers in the Greenfield District, of which F. P. Langmaid was District Manager.

Bellows Falls	H. W. Buzzell
Keene	John F. Tafe
Greenfield	F. P. Langmaid
Brattleboro	R. J. Eldridge
Athol	A. C. Brownell

The Western Division appeared to be composed of these districts: Springfield, Worcester, Pittsfield, Greenfield and Burlington.

May, 1909, Topics—A telephone line is soon to be constructed to the top of Mt. Sugar Loaf, a new state reservation in South Deerfield. This will be a very difficult piece of work on account of the Mt. being so steep and covered with ledges. Tradition says that King Philip and his savage warriors used this Mt. top for signal fires for communication. Now the white race will enjoy the telephone method.

GUIDE: "Kindly notice the long time that elapses before the echo of my voice reaches us. Hello, hello, hello!"

ECHO: (few seconds later) "Hello, hello, hello!"

MRS. NEWRICH: (formerly a telephone operator, absently) "Number, please?"

George Wright of Pittsfield, having found a congenial help-mate in Orange, started up housekeeping in Greenfield, where he was employed as District Supervisor of Equipment.

May, 1909, Topics reported that motorcycles were being used to great advantage by the Plant Dept. in the Greenfield District. The Greenfield, Brattleboro and Athol Exchanges had one 1-cylinder machine each, and Keene, N. H. and Bellows Falls, Vermont each had a 2-cylinder.

Underground cable was being placed along Church Street and a portion of Federal Street in September, 1909.

On Nov. 23, 1909, a meeting of the District Managers was held at District Headquarters, Greenfield, at which occasion S. K. Berry, Directory Manager, addressed them on the sub-

ject of "Directory Advertising." The plan for the solicitation of directory advertising by district and local Managers was begun Nov. 15, 1909.

Edward E. Mellen, formerly Chief Clerk at the District Manager's Office, was promoted to Manager at Athol and Orange, in place of A. C. Brownell, resigned. Earl M. Slate was appointed the new Chief Clerk.

Mary E. Falvey started working for the Company about December, 1909. She was associated with the Greenfield Business Office for many years.

The Jan., 1910, Topics—South Deerfield

The installation of a new three position switchboard at South Deerfield marks another step in the local development of telephony, which in the last ten years has been remarkable. Starting in with less than a dozen telephones ten years ago, the Exchange has grown to 240 subscribers. The original Exchange consisted of a 16-drop switchboard in the Roche Drug Store. This was outgrown and a one-position board installed at the house of Jasper Gillette. When the Exchange moved into the Bank Block a few years ago a second position was added and now a third is necessary.

Jan., 1910, Topics—On January 1st, the Revenue Accounting Dept. completed the transfer of Exchange Accounting for the Pittsfield District from Springfield to Greenfield. At the present time Exchange Accounting for the Greenfield and Pittsfield Districts is performed at the Accounting Office in Greenfield. The Springfield Accounting Office now handles only the Exchange Accounting for the Springfield District.

Archibald D. Flower, Jr., for the past three years Night Chief Operator in the Greenfield Exchange, has accepted the position of Test Man with the Plant Dept., at Brattleboro, and is succeeded in Greenfield by Anthony M. Affhauser, who has been Night Operator for about a year.

March, 1910, Topics—George E. Wright, formerly Central Office Repairman, Greenfield District, has taken the position of Wire Chief at Keene, New Hampshire, recently vacated by James Greene, resigned.

Earle M. Slate, formerly Chief Clerk, has been appointed Collector at Greenfield and Sidney H. Colvin has taken his

place as Chief Clerk to the District Manager, according to the next month's Topics.

The April, 1910, Topics tells of Donat E. Gingras, former Collector at Greenfield, being promoted to Contract Agent with headquarters at Bellows Falls.

Leslie H. Streeter was promoted from Head Combination Man at Greenfield to Wire Chief in May, 1910.

Lester W. Martin, according to the Sept., 1910, Topics, has been transferred from Worcester to the Greenfield District to fill the position of Distribution Engineer formerly held by the late Edward W. Beckwith.

At this time it was reported that the following copper circuits have recently been hung in the District: Boston-Greenfield, Worcester-Greenfield, Bellows Falls-Greenfield and Keene-Greenfield.

Donat E. Gingras, Contract Agent at Bellows Falls, took the position of Chief Clerk to the District Manager at Greenfield about November, 1910.

In telling of the inauguration of a new Society, Topics acquainted its readers with the "Who's Who" in telephone circles:

"About 75 enthusiastic telephone men met at Greenfield on Dec. 30, 1910, and formed the Greenfield Chapter of the Telephone Employees' Association of New England. Thirty four members were transferred from the Pittsfield-Greenfield Chapter and the new Chapter was started with a total membership of 55. Officers elected; President, W. T. Durfee, District Plant Chief; Vice-President, George F. Parker, District Foreman; Treasurer, D. E. Gingras, Commercial Chief Clerk; Secretary, P. C. Lockwood, Manager, Keene, New Hampshire; Corresponding Secretary, H. A. Noyes, Greenfield Plant.

"Entertainment Committee: Frederic P. Langmaid, Jere N. Haskell, Donat Gingras, Charles A. Reynolds, Charles Lawrence, V. K. Redman, Eugene Henderson, Edward E. Mellen, Herbert E. Shaw, J. Walter Shelley, Anthony Affhauser.

"Committee on by-laws: Philip D. Lockwood, Ralph J. Eldridge, Lester W. Martin. Nominating Committee: Samuel F. Parker, George E. Wright, Harold Buzzell.

“Remarks were made by the newly elected officers and the following guests: E. W. Pierce, Chief Clerk to the General Commercial Supt., Boston; Clifford L. Vaughn, District Plant Chief, Pittsfield; C. L. Stone, District Plant Chief, Fitchburg; August McAulay, District Plant Chief, Springfield; C. F. Dufresne, District Manager, Fitchburg; Harry V. Bicknell, Advertising Dept., Boston; H. W. Emerson, PBX Dept., F. G. Daboll, Division Commercial Supt., H. E. Hughes, District Manager, Pittsfield; L. B. Stowe, District Manager, Springfield; John K. Curtis, Special Agent, Western Division; Frank X. Colleton, Special Agent, Boston; Charles H. Lamont, Toll Wire Chief, Springfield; David Martin, Engineer, Portland District; W. A. Parker, Division Cable Foreman, Western Division.

“Letters were read from Harold S. Allen, District Plant Chief, Newton West District; R. P. Jones, Chief Clerk Revenue and Accounting, Boston; R. C. Marden, District Plant Chief, Manchester, New Hampshire; E. W. Longley, Auditor, Boston; C. T. Keller, General Commercial Supt., Boston.

“There were songs by Frank X. Colleton, of Boston; and J. Walter Shelley, Right of Way Man; Charles A. Reynolds, Contract Agent; D. E. Gingras, Chief Clerk to District Manager, of Greenfield. An interesting initiation of one candidate followed the speaking.”

The following were the Greenfield District Contract Agents, as disclosed by Topics: F. B. Adams, J. N. Haskell, and C. A. Reynolds.

The new Telephone and Telegraph Society of New England became a reality in April, 1911, by the merger of the Class A section of the Telephone Employees' Association and the Telephone Society of New England. The Greenfield Chapter Directory for 1911–1912 was as follows: President, George F. Parker; Vice-President, R. J. Eldridge; Secretary, Harry A. Noyes; Treasurer, C. S. Stebbins.

The attendance of the Greenfield Operators in the year 1911 was noteworthy. Nettie J. Herre, local Supervisor, and Anna B. Kossbiel were on hand every trick; Katherine Grogan, Senior Operator, and Carrie Bitzer were absent one half

day only; Nellie T. Mack and Matilda Moshert were absent one day during the year.

Robert H. Lawton's first appearance in Western Mass., telephonically speaking, was in 1911, when he became PBX and Central Office Repairman for the Athol and Greenfield Areas. He was first employed as Night Operator in Athol May, 1907, under the late Hattie Sawtelle and Frank G. Daboll. In 1910 he was advanced to Testman, and after his promotion to Central Office Repairman with the \$16.50 weekly remuneration, he married Eva Lockwood, an Athol Operator.

March, 1912, Topics—On the first of April, F. P. Langmaid, who since Aug. 16, 1908, has been District Manager of the Greenfield District, as well as Manager of the Exchange, retires from the Company to engage in the laundry business in the city of Greenfield.

In testimony of his service and personality, a luncheon was tendered him at the Hotel Weldon, Greenfield, which was attended by about 20 of his associates in the Company. A handsome solid gold watch chain and charm were presented to him by those present, D. E. Gingras, Chief Clerk to Mr. Langmaid, making the presentation speech. Others who spoke in honor of the occasion were R. P. Jones, G. G. S. Perkins, E. W. Pierce, and many were the hearty and appreciative expressions of regard passed about the table. The good wishes of all who knew Mr. Langmaid are with him in his new enterprise.

The transfer of Jesse F. Hall from the position of District Manager at New Bedford to the similar one at Greenfield, came about in the shifting of positions resultant from the retirement of F. P. Langmaid.

Mary T. O'Connell started her telephone career in the Greenfield Accounting office in April, 1912. She lived in the near by town of Turners Falls. Mary was employed as a Bookkeeper in the Exchange Service Dept., handling a thousand accounts, or so, at first. The work included writing out the bills, and preparing and addressing the envelopes for mailing.

The Burlington District of the Western Division, including the Burlington and Rutland Areas, which has been run on the unit plan since the Company reorganized in 1908, has been consolidated with the Greenfield District on April 1, 1912,

and is now to be organized under the functional organization. Manager John A. Russell of Rutland has been transferred to Burlington and is succeeded by Samuel H. Walley, formerly Manager at Milford, Mass.

D. E. Gingras, who has been Chief Clerk in the Greenfield District, was appointed Manager of the Greenfield Exchange on April 29, 1912.

Mr. Gingras, a native of Turners Falls, entered the service of the New England Telephone Co. in 1909 as a Collector. He was soon appointed one of the Contract Agents for the Greenfield District. He was shifted about from one exchange to another, wherever current work required an additional man. In 1910 he was appointed District Chief Clerk for the Greenfield District.

The Greenfield District now consisted of the following exchange areas—Athol, Greenfield, Rutland, Keene, Brattleboro, Bellows Falls and Burlington.

Horace E. Roby, Traffic Inspector, was transferred to the Greenfield District in August, 1913, with headquarters at Rutland, Vermont. In November of the same year, he was made Assistant District Traffic Chief. Thereupon, Topics reported the following social event: "On December 29, Horace E. Roby, Assistant Traffic Chief, gave an enjoyable and enthusiastic party at the Bardwell Hotel, Rutland, to the local Plant and Commercial Depts. and visiting employees from Springfield. Light refreshments were served, after which a smoke talk was enjoyed for the remainder of the evening."

Junkman: "Any rags, papers, old iron?"

Man of the House (angrily): "No, my wife's away."

Junkman: "Any bottles?"

George E. Wright was promoted to the position of Wire Chief at Keene in 1914.

The April, 1916, Topics reported that Edward E. Mellen, who was transferred to Athol as Manager, will exchange territories with Edwin P. Wilbur, Manager of the Framingham Exchange, who desires to reside on his own farm in Orange, near Athol. Manager Wilbur entered the employ of the Company in June, 1892, at St. Johnsbury as a Groundman and

later was one of the crew that ran the first copper wire from White River Junction to Littleton, and Lancaster, N. H., and from Bellows Falls to Rutland and Burlington, Vt.

Chester H. Pratt, in May, 1917, was transferred from Division Revenue Supervisor at Greenfield to the same position in the new Accounting Office at Rutland.

The Northfield Exchange was purchased from the Northfield Farms Telephone Co. in February, 1918, which added an attractive school town to the Greenfield Exchange Area.

April, 1918, Topics—John F. Enwright, who was recently transferred from Gardner to Greenfield, as Manager, has had experience in all depts. of our Company in the Western Division. He started out at Fitchburg as a General Clerk in 1907. After a series of transfers and promotions, each one being well deserved, he was appointed Manager at Gardner in place of Fred G. Kegler who was with the 401st Telegraph Battalion.

Feb., 1921, Topics—Greenfield Area Transferred

To more closely coordinate plant activities within the area, as well as on account of the unnatural association of the Greenfield area with that of the Pittsfield District, as it was previously constituted, a new District was established on Jan. 1, 1921.

The new District to be known as Northampton, on account of the location of its headquarters, is made up of the Greenfield Area, from the Pittsfield District, comprising the exchanges of Greenfield, Turners Falls, Northfield, Bernardston and South Deerfield; and the Northampton Area, from the Springfield District, comprising nine exchanges. The Holyoke Exchange was added to the District in 1923. The Commercial Dept. was not affected.

Miss Elizabeth M. O'Keefe, Chief Operator at Greenfield, resigned her position on Sept. 17, 1921, and two days later she was married. She had completed 22 years of service, starting with the Company as an Operator on April 1, 1899, and by reason of her unusual ability, made rapid progress and was appointed Chief Operator on Nov. 12, 1905.

Feb., 1922, Topics—Ralph Eldridge, Manager at Brattleboro, first learned to operate a switchboard in Jencks and



Armstein Shoe Store at Shelburne Falls, where the Central Office was at one time located.

Resigning his position, he went to Greenfield, where for a time he was paymaster and timekeeper at Wells Brothers' Machine Shop. While there he became acquainted with H. E. Hughes, who was then Manager at Greenfield, and Mr. Hughes, who has a keen eye for picking out good men, offered him the position of Chief Operator in the Greenfield Exchange.

Eldridge went to Shelburne Falls to talk the matter over with his folks and decided that he would decline. On going back to Greenfield he met Charles Lawrence on the train, who was then the local trouble shooter. Mr. Lawrence carried a coil of copper wire, spurs, com-a-longs, a hundred or two glass insulators, more or less, brackets, etc., and was, in fact, a typical telephone man of that time and a more enthusiastic booster of the business could not be found. In the short ride between Shelburne Falls and Greenfield, Eldridge became thoroughly convinced that his life work was to be telephone business, and, accordingly, he accepted Mr. Hughes' offer. This was in February, 1902.

Combined July and August, 1923, Topics—On Thursday evening May 31, the employees of the Greenfield Exchange had a very successful "get-together" party, which was held in Odd Fellows Hall. The employees of all telephone offices within a radius of 50 miles were invited, and about 200 accepted. The idea of the party was to have the visiting employees become better acquainted with those of Greenfield. The result was most gratifying.

Present at the party were: L. L. Ross, District Traffic Chief at Pittsfield and Mrs. Ross; C. A. Weston, District Manager from Springfield and Mrs. Weston; L. V. Gillis, District Plant Supervisor from Northampton, and Mrs. Gillis; Carl Smith, District Plant Clerk from Northampton, and Mrs. Smith; H. A. Amidon, Assistant Traffic Chief from Springfield; Miss Mae I. Donovan, Toll Chief Operator from Springfield; Miss Helen J. Barney, Chief Operator from Northampton; Miss Alice V. Feeney, Chief Operator from

Holyoke; Miss Lillian I. O'Clair, Chief Operator from Northfield; Mrs. Agnes M. L. LeGendre, Chief Operator from Turners Falls; William H. Shea, Wire Chief from Northampton, and scores of employees from the near by exchanges.

Dancing was interspersed with vocal solos by E. J. Hugh and Joseph Marini; and Miss Dorothy Lyman rendered piano solos and readings. Refreshments were served at intermission by the Greenfield Operators. Mr. Gillis was Master of the art of punch serving.

Robert H. Lawton was appointed Greenfield Wire Chief in 1923. After leaving the PBX and Central Office Repair job in Athol and Greenfield in 1913, "Bob" served as Wire Chief in the White River exchange, and in 1915 returned to Athol in the same capacity. In 1917 he joined the 401st Telegraph Battalion Signal Corps and served 14 months in France, becoming Master Signal Electrician in charge of central office installations. He returned to Athol in 1919.

April, 1924, Topics—Vail Medal to Sadie Collins

Our South Deerfield office serves a scattered farming community, and in such a community a fire is a matter of serious concern, especially at night.

On Feb. 16, 1923, at about 10 P.M., Miss Sadie Collins, Junior Supervisor in charge, was called by a patron and asked if she knew the location of a fire, indicated by a blaze on the horizon.

She didn't, but she proceeded to find out, instead of assuming that because no alarm had been sounded in South Deerfield, the fire might be in Greenfield or Turners Falls. She called several subscribers and finally one said it looked as if the fire was at the Ellison place.

The Ellisons had retired for the night. After being aroused they made a hasty survey and then reported that one of their farm buildings was afire, and that their barn and other outbuildings, as well as the farmhouse itself, was threatened.

Miss Collins volunteered to summon help. She first called the Chief of the South Deerfield Fire Department and then rallied all the neighbors, with the result that the farmhouse and other buildings were saved.

Jan., 1925, Topics—Ralph H. Hoit has been appointed Manager at Greenfield. Prior to his recent transfer Mr. Hoit was the Manager at Palmer.

Ralph or “Dutch”, as his friends know him, entered the Company at Manchester, N.H., in 1917. There, he was for a time Division Chief Clerk to the Supt. of Plant, and later he served as Right-of-Way Agent. Soon after his transfer to the Commercial Dept. in the fall of 1923, Mr. Hoit was appointed Manager at Palmer.

Nov., 1925, Topics—On September 6, Lillian O’Hara was appointed Chief Operator at the Greenfield Office. Miss O’Hara succeeded Josephine Gleason, who has been transferred to Vermont.

Miss O’Hara entered the employ of the Company on Jan. 27, 1913, and served in various capacities until her promotion to a Supervisor’s position in 1924. Rich experience, pleasing personality, and a true sense of management, presage Miss O’Hara’s success as Greenfield’s Chief Traffic executive.

Sept. 1, 1926, the Northampton District was discontinued, the Northampton and Holyoke Exchange Areas reverting to the Springfield District, while the Greenfield Area was returned to the Pittsfield District.

Keith Fletcher, Commercial Representative, was transferred from Springfield to Greenfield in March, 1927, taking the place of Louis E. Fontaine, transferred to North Adams.

William Hoggan, Commercial Representative at Pittsfield, was transferred to Greenfield in May, 1927.

July, 1927, Topics—Ralph Hoit, Manager at Greenfield, has a sense of humor and he needed it on this occasion. He was aroused from sleep by the ringing of his telephone bell. After banging his knee on a chair, he reached the instrument.

“Hello,” he said as pleasantly as possible.

“Are you the Manager of the Telephone Company?” asked the voice.

“Yes, what can I do for you?”

“Tell me, how does it feel to get out of bed at 2 o’clock in the morning to answer a wrong number?”

Joseph E. H. Gamlin was appointed Line Assigner of the Greenfield Exchange area in 1928. He first joined the Com-

pany on Oct. 26, 1925, at Northampton in the Engineering Dept., transferring the following year to Greenfield as Wire Chief's Clerk, which position he held until his present assignment.

April, 1929, Topics—Leslie W. Ranney, for many years a Construction Foreman, with headquarters at Greenfield, was recently promoted to the position of Assistant District Construction Foreman, with headquarters at Montpelier, Vermont, coming under the supervision of Charles H. Pillsbury, District Construction Foreman.

Mr. Ranney is a native born Vermonter. He first went to work as a Groundman in a crew for our Company about twenty-four years ago at Keene, N.H.

Mr. Ranney's first job was cutting brush through swamp, swarming with mosquitoes, black flies and poison dogwood on a hot summer's day, having gone to work in the morning with the understanding that that was all the work the Company could give him at that time. Also, the man who hired him was rather dubious as to whether he would stick. He did not know the Vermonters quite as well then as now. He did stick, even though for several days his face and hands were a sight from insect bites, as he was a bit of a tenderfoot, having just left school.

Jan., 1930, Topics—Wire Chief George T. Fahey was transferred to the staff of the Division Plant Supervisor November 26th. Mr. Fahey's place at Greenfield will be filled by Frank D. Viens, who is known by about everybody in the Western Division as the genial Testman at North Adams.

Mr. Fahey has been employed continuously in the District since 1906. He was for many years Wire Chief of the Great Barrington area and played no small part in the rapid telephone development of that widely scattered territory.

In 1924 he was transferred to Greenfield where he has been very successful and made many friends, all of whom wish him continued success in his chosen field of educational work which he will follow in his new assignment.

The Millers Falls Exchange was purchased from the Millers Falls Telephone Co. by the New England Co. June 1, 1930.

Most of the construction consisted of the ring type attached to houses.

The July, 1930, Topics displayed a small picture of the new Greenfield telephone building which was just started and which was to house the new step by step dial office.

## CHAPTER 19

### *Independent Telephone Companies*

Granby Telephone and Telegraph Company—Heath Telephone Company—Highland Telephone Company—Richmond Telephone Company

#### GRANBY TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY

The first telephone service provided in the town of Granby was a Holyoke pay station. It was first shown in the Holyoke business directory of 1899. A prominent business man of Granby said, "I believe the telephone in the store of Oramel L. Davis was the first in town."

Soon afterwards, Dr. Dickson, who lived and practiced in Granby and also conducted an office in Belchertown, succeeded in having a private line run to his Belchertown office. It was not long, however, before a more comprehensive system was needed.

Thanks are due Alston D. Mugnier for the privilege of using the minutes of the stockholders' meetings. Several Granby people of early telephone days also have been most helpful.

The Agreement of Association was signed February 16, 1903, by the following: Richard E. Dickson, M.D., George L. Witt, George F. Eastman, Clifford W. Ferry, Willard A. Taylor, Dwight C. Nutting, and Carl M. Pihl.

Capital stock \$1200, 48 shares of the par value of \$25. The

largest stockholder was James J. Bateson, who bought 4 shares the others contenting themselves with 1 or 2 shares.

Dr. Dickson was elected permanent Clerk by ballot. The men who signed the Agreement of Association were elected to serve as the board of directors. The directors, thereupon, elected James J. Bateson their President and chose the following officers of the Company: Willard A. Taylor, President; Dr. Richard E. Dickson, Treasurer; Carl M. Pihl, Engineer; George F. Eastman, Clerk.

It was voted that an annual rental of \$12 with rebate of \$4 be charged for each outfit along present proposed line, rental paid quarterly in advance, tolls quarterly in arrears.

An estimate of the cost of construction of the proposed telephone line was submitted at a hearing before the Commissioner of Corporations, State House, Boston, by C. M. Pihl March 31, 1903. The total cost came to \$1200, some of the more important items being estimated as follows:

380 poles—\$475; 3000 ft. paired rubber covered copper wire for connection from pole line to subscribers' residences—\$50; 20 miles iron wire #12 for lines on poles—\$100; cost of labor setting 380 poles—\$115; cost of labor running wire on poles and to houses—\$165; cost of labor in wiring and installing 25 telephones—\$75; stationery and general expenses—\$72.

There is no mention of a switchboard; this article was rented from Carl Pihl, who was the Manager of the Holyoke exchange. The telephone instruments also were rented at first.

Austin Carver, a stockholder, did much towards building the pole lines, and he was chosen to be the Construction Man, Installer, Repairer, etc., which he did for many years to the satisfaction of all. George L. Carver worked with his father while attending high school, and then joined the Company. They constituted a capable construction crew.

George F. Bell, owner of the Granby general store and Town Postmaster, was chosen to manage the switchboard, which was placed in his store. He had a line run to his house, next door, so that in case of emergency, when the office was

closed, an incoming call sounded a bell, and he could put through the out-call to Holyoke. Mr. Bell was ably assisted at the switchboard by Winfred F. Forward, who in later years became State Representative, and by Miss Bertha O'Neill, who became teacher in the Granby Grade School.

The former Holyoke pay station line was used to connect the Granby switchboard to the Holyoke central office for toll calls.

A number of families dwelling in the Turkey Hill Section of Belchertown—southwest corner, adjoining Granby—requested to have service, which was approved by the board of directors August 26, 1903. The terms for the extension of one line were: "They to furnish poles similar in dimensions to our own, set, from their territory to the home of G. L. Witt, the same to become the property of the Granby Telephone and Telegraph Co., and that they pay for use of the phones at the rate of twelve dollars per annum."

At the January 18, 1904, meeting, it was voted to charge subscribers \$12 per year for rent of the telephone instruments—no rebate. Also to have Dwight C. Nutting act as Manager. It was voted to have Mr. Pihl's Holyoke night operator answer calls from 10 P.M. to 7 A.M. for a charge of 30 cents per call. Also to petition Mr. Pihl for a reduction in toll from 15 to 10 cents to Holyoke and South Hadley.

January 16, 1905, at a meeting of the directors, George L. Witt was chosen President of the Company, and Dwight C. Nutting, Manager.

January 15, 1906, George F. Eastman was chosen President and Clifford W. Ferry Manager. It was voted to increase the charge for rental of telephones to \$13 a year, in anticipation of losing the subscribers in the Turkey Hill Section. (The New England Co. offered to buy the business in this corner of Belchertown in order to add it to its Belchertown exchange. The price asked by the Granby Company was \$500. The deal was consummated in April, 1906.)

January 18, 1909, it was voted to raise telephone rates to \$16, in consideration of 24 hour service. Directors chose George R. Smith President and Manager of the Company.

It was known that Mr. Bell had a duplicate switchboard



put in his house, and this was probably the occasion for it. Besides having these duties, he was also a member of the board of directors.

January 27, 1914, it was voted that A. P. Smith be charged \$20 per year for his private line,—probably the first subscriber to have one party exchange service.

January 15, 1917, bills paid within 3 months of date to receive a discount of 25 cents.

January 25, 1919, directors voted to place central station with Roy F. Hobart. Mrs. Myrtie Hobart, who later became Town Clerk, was appointed Chief Operator and was ably assisted by Mrs. Herbert Durant. During this period two more Holyoke trunk lines were added.

In 1920 George F. Eastman secured additional stock, giving him 22 shares out of the 48 total, and the next year his holdings increased to 26 shares, which made him the first majority stockholder.

About 1924 the Hobarts felt obliged to give up the switchboard, and it was moved to the home of Rutherford H. Ferry, Mrs. Ferry taking charge of the board.

April 23, 1924, George Eastman resigned as Manager. R. H. Ferry was elected Manager; Mrs. Maud C. Eastman was chosen Auditor in place of C. W. Ball, resigned; Treasurer, Sadie T. Ferry; President, George Eastman.

In 1925 the Ferrys moved to Feeding Hills and rented their Granby home to Glenn I. Snow. Mrs. Snow operated the switchboard for the Ferrys, with the help of her daughter, Elizabeth, and an occasional turn by Mrs. Hobart.

In 1927 "Rud" Ferry bought most of George Eastman's stock for an investment, obtaining 34 shares,—a majority.

The Company paid dividends intermittently, averaging for the years when there were payments, about 8% or \$2 per year.

At a meeting June 1, 1928, the stock ownership was shown as follows: Glenn I. Snow, 25 shares; Mrs. Martha R. Snow, 15; Elizabeth W. Snow, 7; George F. Eastman, 1. The adjourned meeting June 2nd continued Mr. Eastman as President, and elected Mr. Snow Manager, and Mrs. Snow Auditor. The Snows then conducted the business at the same location.

November 1, 1931, George F. Eastman resigned as President to be followed by Glenn I. Snow.

The Ferrys had decided to sell their home, so the Snows bought a lot on a knoll, on route 202, and built an attractive house, which had a special room to house the telephone operations. It was occupied by them in December, 1931.

The January 1, 1933, meeting showed that Mr. Eastman's one share had been transferred to Elizabeth Snow, giving the Snow family complete ownership.

At the January, 1933, meeting, the following officers and directors were elected: President and Manager, Glenn I. Snow; Treasurer, Martha Snow; Clerk, Elizabeth Snow. Directors: Glenn I. Snow, Martha and Elizabeth Snow. (All opposition candidates were snowed under—so to speak.)

There were no other minutes recorded until March 18, 1946, when it was voted to transfer 5 shares of stock to Alston D. Mugnier and 5 to Elliot Gould. Glenn I. Snow resigned as President and Director, and Robert E. Bacon was elected President, pro tem.

Alston D. Mugnier was a civil engineer, who was active in the design of hydro electric, flood control, and other large construction projects. Like many people, he was looking for a house in the spring of 1946, when he was attracted by the Snows' residence. Mr. Mugnier expressed the transaction in this way, "I bought the home of Snow in the spring of 1946, with no intention of carrying on the telephone business; simply looking for a house; but like the man, who caught the bear by the tail, I had to hang on."

Three friends of Mr. Mugnier were interested in the telephone project and offered to join him in buying control of the Company. They were: Robert E. Bacon, Vernon A. Luce and Elliot Gould.

The Snow Family were reported to have operated the Company in a very satisfactory manner. Among the operators employed by them were: Miss O'Neill, who first gained her experience on the original board; Mrs. Rosanna Ruel, later Postmaster of the Town; Mrs. Viola Lyman Hatch; Miss Barbara Merrill; Mrs. Barbara Cole Wesniak; and Mrs. Marguerite Houle, who is still with the Company.

March 3, 1949, Alston D. Mugnier was chosen President and Manager, and Robert E. Bacon was retained as Special Consultant; Pauline E. Mugnier, Clerk. The directors were Robert E. Bacon, Pauline E. Mugnier, and Alston D. Mugnier.

About this time, Mr. Mugnier bought the stock of Mr. Bacon and that of Mr. Luce, the latter serving as technical advisor, and later as director.

The Mugnier family were well adapted for the telephone business. Mr. Mugnier was a Consulting Engineer, progressive, and industrious. Mrs. Mugnier was a good bookkeeper, and soon learned the art of operating a switchboard. Alston, Jr., and George were soon taught the work of linemen. Mary Joanna, the youngest, had charge of telegrams, sorted toll tickets, and learned the switchboard; while Paul, the youngest boy, took over the duties of Night Operator. The boys later became Engineers, and Mary a Graduate Nurse.

Granby was formerly a farming town, but in the middle of the 1940's, due to autos and good roads, people moved to the country; which changed this town to a suburban community. There were 175 subscribers in 1947, and in April, 1958, 800.

The Exchange was converted to modern automatic dial operation August 16, 1956, which necessitated rebuilding the outside plant,—costly improvements. Now, on top of his other duties, Mr. Mugnier has the pleasure of seeing that the Company's interest charges and installment payments reach the Rural Electrification Administration—on time.

#### HEATH TELEPHONE COMPANY

The *Greenfield Recorder-Gazette* delved into its past pages and emerged with an interesting account of this enterprising Company, which appeared in its Feb. 23, 1942, edition as follows: "In 1891 Walter E. Kinsman and Isaac W. Stetson decided they wanted to telephone their grocery orders to the general store rather than walk there every day or two. Their neighbors soon arranged to have their homes connected to the same wire, and by 1898 the idea had become so popular that the Heath Telephone Co. was organized with a capital of \$66,000.

“While the Heath concern was still only a collection of phones around a central office in the general grocery store, there was a similar movement in Rowe, where storekeeper B. T. Henry and Dr. Samuel Bowker organized early in the 90’s the Rowe Telephone Association. It, too, grew and with the Heath concern began to spread beyond its town’s borders.

“On August, 1905, the Heath firm purchased the assets and lines of the Rowe firm. As early as 1901 it had established its headquarters in Shelburne Falls where it collided with the New England Telephone Co. Many a farmer and storekeeper for years kept both the New England and Heath phones available to enable him to reach all his acquaintances, since neither concern would furnish inter-company connections.”

The Heath Telephone Co. continued to expand, according to an item in the *Republican* of Aug. 2, 1905: “The Heath Telephone Co. has been busy since spring with extensions, and has enough work ahead to last until snow flies. The construction gang lives in a tent, which can be easily moved, and has a cook along. Today work begins on the conduit from the central office across Bridge Street (Shelburne Falls) to the rear of the bank block.

“The cable will contain 50 pairs of wires. The wires will be carried up River Street in an aerial cable. The Company has 96 machines to install west of Shelburne Falls, including Colrain. Three new lines have been strung to Colrain and 2 to Buckland. The Company has a franchise in Hawley, and that town will be liberally sown with telephones. The extension into New Boston and Spruce Corner in Ashfield will be made by way of Hawley. A switchboard is to be placed in Charlemont.”

In January, 1906, the Heath Telephone Co. secured a franchise from the Selectmen of Whately and was reputed to be a close competitor of the New England Telephone Co. in many of the surrounding towns.

It was reported by the *Recorder-Gazette* that the Deerfield Valley Telephone Co. was organized in 1906, being financed and controlled by the New England Telephone Co. It took over what was left of the Readsboro and Wilmington Telephone Co. (which had been organized in 1895 by a Mr. Beemis

but had run into financial difficulties) and also acquired from the New England Telephone Co. the exchanges of Shelburne Falls, Conway and Ashfield May 2, 1906, and Colrain Jan. 28, 1907.

The Northampton *Hampshire Gazette* of April 10, 1906, gave the following news: "Heath Telephone Co. announced an increase of rates from \$12.00 to \$18.00 a year for business. Report comes from Shelburne Falls that many subscribers of the Heath Company feel aggrieved. Many subscribers were having the instruments of that Company taken out and the apparatus of the Deerfield Valley Telephone Co. installed, rather than pay the increased rate for business telephones. It is understood to be one of the plans of the Citizens Independent Telephone Co. of Williamsburg to connect with the lines of the Heath Company at a point between Williamsburg and Whately."

Negotiations between the Heath and the New England Companies at last brought about the connection of the two companies' exchanges, effective Jan. 1, 1909, which permitted the Heath's customers to make calls to far-away cities for the first time, as well as to most any other exchange.

The Heath Company absorbed the Deerfield Valley Co. Jan. 1, 1909, but in so doing it had to submit to an exchange of stock, which gave the New England Telephone Co. a strong minority control of 32.43 percent of their stock, according to the *Recorder-Gazette*.

As a result of this transaction, the following exchanges were purchased by the Heath Telephone Co. on Jan. 1, 1909: Ashfield, Colrain, Conway and Shelburne Falls.

March, 1909, Topics—The work of connecting the Deerfield Valley Telephone Co.'s lines with the Heath Telephone Co.'s lines in Shelburne Falls, has been progressing rapidly under the direction of the Greenfield Plant District. It was necessary to place an extra 30 pair cable on Main Street, and a new switchboard is being installed by Mr. Meyers of the Equipment Department.

Oct., 1918, Topics—On September 1, Herbert Newell, who has been Treasurer of the Heath Telephone Co. since October, 1901, and its General Manager since October, 1914, turned

over his duties to Frank L. Reed, his successor, and assumed the duties of Treasurer of the Shelburne Falls Savings Bank.

The Company had about 250 stations in use when Mr. Newell became connected with it (October 1901), which have increased to 1771 stations in use.

December, 1922, Topics—The executive committee of the Heath Telephone Company, Shelburne Falls, met Monday afternoon October 30, and elected Guy W. Hutchins of Laconia, N.H., General Manager to succeed Mr. Frank L. Reed who resigned to take an executive position in the lumber business.

Mr. Hutchins was first employed by the New England Telephone Co. February, 1901, as a Night Operator and Collector at Laconia. After two years, he was transferred to the Central Division as General Inspector. After promotions to Combination Man, Testman, Plant Foreman, he received his present offer.

M. Hutchins is a man of even temperament, of a very pleasing personality and will be greatly missed by the employees and public alike throughout Central New Hampshire.

Norma S. Behr, who has been Head Bookkeeper of the Heath Telephone Co. for some time past, has been elected Treasurer and Secretary of the Company. She began her new duties Nov. 1, 1922.

April, 1924, Topics—A delightful and unusual dinner party was given in the office of the Heath Telephone Co. recently when the young women employees were hostesses to the men employees and their wives. The table was laid for 24 and sweet peas formed a beautiful center piece, the other decorations being in green and white. Each guest received a favor. Special guests of the occasion were the Manager, G. W. Hutchins and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Lang, Mr. and Mrs. Ashton, Mr. and Mrs. Harris, Charles Burton, John Sullivan and Louis Stone.

The committee in charge was made up of Misses Nellie O'Brien, Margaret O'Brien, Isabel Booker, Vivian Booker and Edna Sommers.

Sept., 1924, Topics—Mrs. Lois Dyer of Ashfield, seventy six years young, a valued employee of the Heath Telephone Co., has for years faithfully, courteously and efficiently attended

the telephone needs of the people of Ashfield as well as zealously guarded the interests of the Company she represents.

A few years ago she attempted to retire, the substantial gifts of her subscribers bearing witness to the fact of their regrets, but after a short time, like all loyal members of our Telephone family, the urge proved too strong, and once again at the Ashfield switchboard we found her, smiling with pride, over an exchange recently reconstructed to Al efficiency.

The *Recorder-Gazette* of Feb. 23, 1942, published the following past history: "The final defeat of the Heath concern, whose revenues had steadily been shrinking during the prosperous 1920's, was heralded Dec. 17, 1928, when the concern voted to change its name to the Western New England Telephone Co. This change of name was effected in the case of Ashfield, Colrain, Conway and Shelburne Falls Exchanges Feb. 21, 1929, and May 21, 1929, in the case of the Charlemont Exchange. The Heath Exchange was purchased by the Western New England Co. Oct. 7, 1930.

"In September, 1929, the New England Telephone Co. assumed control with purchase of additional stock, giving it 63.5 percent control. On Aug. 12, 1932, the old Heath concern was discontinued."

#### HIGHLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY

Hiram Moore, of Millington, was credited with having made an electric speaking telephone in the late 80's. He was quite ingenious and liked to study things of this nature. Sewall King, who used to visit him with his father, described a few of its features: The transmitter was a wooden box, about 4 inches square, having a mouthpiece and a thin White Cedar diaphragm, 2½ inches in diameter. A carbon button, about ½ inch in diameter, was fastened to the inside of the diaphragm, against which pressed another carbon, with a rounded head (the pressure being adjustable), which was attached to one end of a metal L shaped arm. The long side of this arm extended to the rear of the box, where it was hinged loosely, so as not to impede the vibrations. An induction coil, battery, etc., enabled the instrument to produce synchronous vibrations. A single pole magnet receiver also was produced. This

telephonic device was used between Mr. Moore's house and workshop; and it is believed that a line was run to the depot, over a mile away.

Nothing further happened in the scientific field until about 1898, when Rawson King, Sewall's father, had Sewall build a private line to his daughter's home, about a quarter of a mile away, using a couple of electric telephones. Rawson King, who owned a small farm and was a painter by trade, was quite impressed by this means of communication and envisioned its possibilities—calling friends, the doctor, stores, depot, grist-mill, creamery, etc.

He succeeded in interesting Willard Putnam, a large-scale lumberman, and Dr. Fearl, the local physician. In 1901, these three men put up enough money to build a neighborhood telephone line. They called it the "Highland Telephone Company," although a mere understanding existed between them.

Sewall V. King was delegated to build the line from Cooleyville, in the southwest part of New Salem, to Millington, southeast part, with a branch line north to New Salem Center. A few subscribers were added, who were desired for social and business reasons. They were able to ring one another by turning the generator crank. About ten Deveau telephones, made in Boston, and a few made by Couch and Seely were purchased.

A few people in the West Street section (about a mile west of New Salem Center) asked for service, but Mr. Putnam thought they had enough subscribers to start with; so the applicants decided to build a line of their own. It was called the "Crescent Telephone Company" and was under the direction of Levi Flagg.

In about a year there were 25 parties on the Highland Company line, and it was decided to divide it. The 2 lines were then joined together at the home of Rawson King, and a switching arrangement was made by Sewall, which he and other members of the family operated.

About 1905 Sewall obtained permission to extend the lines to Shutesbury, Locks Village, and Wendell. This increase in business necessitated a change to a 6 line switchboard, which had plugs, cords and jacks.



About this time Dr. Fearl sold his interest in the Company to Mrs. King and Mrs. Putnam.

The communication spirit spread to North Leverett, where a group of men headed by Gus V. Bowen formed a co-operative telephone society, called the "Valley Telephone Company." It served North Leverett and Moores Corner but had no night or Sunday service. It was not long before they sold out to the Highland Company. When the men called to connect the subscribers to their lines, the usual exclamation was, "How can we call operator way over in Cooleyville!" The Highland Company acquired about 30 subscribers and a toll line to Greenfield.

About 1905 the Company began to grow faster, and soon it was realized that a more up-to-date organization was needed. Consequently, a change in its legal status was effected, the first part of the document reading as follows:

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Be it known that whereas Willard Putnam—Rawson King—Harriet B. Putnam and Martha E. King have associated themselves with the intention of forming a corporation under the name of

THE HIGHLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY,

for the purpose of the transmission of intelligence by electricity with a capital of five thousand dollars, common stock, and have complied with the provisions——

(Signed)

Wm. M. Olin  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

The new Company voted to purchase a larger switchboard, and a contract was entered into with the New England Telephone Company whereby a trunk line was run to the Athol exchange to provide outside service. Also the Highland Company agreed to cease buying the Seely transmitters and to lease telephones from the New England Company,—to insure uniformity.

Sewall King had been appointed Manager of the Company. The King home, where the switchboard was located, was on the old road to Millington, just west of the present Daniel Shays Highway, near the present Kings Hill Cabins.

Rawson King died in 1914, leaving his interest in the Company to his son, Sewall, and his daughter, Mrs. Louise Brown.

Catherine M. Connor, a school teacher in Cooleyville, lived with Mary F. Vaughn, a dressmaker. These two friends bought some stock in the Highland Telephone Company. In 1916, Willard Putnam sold his shares to them, which gave them a controlling interest. The girls, being interested in farming, bought a 100-acre farm, having a large house. It was (and is) on the old road to Millington about half a mile east of the Daniel Shays Highway. It was about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles northeast of Cooleyville Center, and was often referred to as "The Cooleyville Telephone Company." The switchboard was moved to the farm house one Sunday in August, 1918, by some Athol telephone men.

Miss Connor was elected President and Manager; and, regardless of these lofty titles, she tended the switchboard nights. After breakfast, Murray Brown tended the board throughout the day, and a high school girl spelled him in the evening.

Miss Vaughn, who was elected Treasurer, was no less efficient and most cordial to visitors. She made out the bills among other duties, writing in long hand. These enterprising women also found time to do some farming. They kept a flock of sheep, some turkeys, and about 60 thoroughbred cattle.

The ice storm of November, 1921, took down about all of the Company's pole lines. A toll line, belonging to the American and the New England Telephone Companies, which passed by at the rear of the farm house, met the same fate. Miss Connor hired a few local men to restore the Highland's service, but she soon learned that they were connecting the wrong wires. The American's construction crew were boarding at the farm house, so Miss Connor engaged one of their crew, Emers H. Bernard, to come to work for her. He took Sewall King's place, who had not done much work for the Company since the sale of the family's stock to the new management.

About 1923 Levi Flagg decided to give up the telephone business. The ice storm had pretty well wrecked the Crescent Company's lines, which had been supported mostly by trees and fence posts; and the wires, now being on the ground, were trampled on by the grazing cattle. Besides, the telephone was just a side line to Mr. Flagg. His chief endeavor was selling automobile parts to people, who not only made their own cars on the installment plan, but learned how to look after them.

It was April 26, 1927, that the Massachusetts legislature approved an act instructing the Metropolitan Water Supply Commission to develop a new water supply system from the waters of Swift River. Such a plan was spoken of back in 1895 and later revived, but the fears of the residents had subsided.

The reservoir project was to take nearly half of the Highland's territory: Prescott, North Dana, Dana Center, Millington and parts of Cooleyville. Catherine Connor and Mary Vaughn struggled to keep their enterprise going, and they were assisted by Emers Bernard, who had become a stockholder and a staunch assistant.

Then came the hurricane of 1938, which again laid low the pole lines. The girls reluctantly decided to give up what remained of their enterprise. The Department of Public Utilities requested the New England Telephone Company to provide service to those who were going to remain and who wanted service.

The Highland Company continued to operate, at a decreasing rate, until October, 1940, when the New England Company was ready to render service. About 48 parties were connected to the Amherst exchange, 38 to the Orange exchange and 24 to the Greenfield dial office, a total of 110, compared to nearly 200 at the peak of prosperity.

#### RICHMOND TELEPHONE COMPANY

This Utility was organized in 1903 by a group of citizens interested in providing telephone service to the town of Richmond, situated in the beautiful Berkshires. The Richmond Iron Works had been connected to the Telegraph Co.'s office in Pittsfield in 1895, but this telegraph line was not available

to the townspeople. Neither were there any private telephone lines.

The new Telephone Company was capitalized for \$1610, represented by 23 shares of stock, par value \$70. Investors were limited to three shares of stock.

The officers elected were: Manager, William Sherrill; Treasurer, Granville Sharp; Secretary, John Ayer.

The management decided to furnish service to the 22 stockholders first. Their homes were scattered about the town, so that quite a few pole lines were required. "Will" Sherrill, the Manager, who was a Selectman, had a town road gang dig the holes, and the stockholders were allowed to contribute chestnut poles, from their woods, towards the purchase of their stock,—this was before the chestnut blight had devastated these valuable trees.

A small wall magneto switchboard was installed in the Depot. Fred Clement, the Station Agent, looked after the board. Another switchboard was placed in his home for night service, Mrs. Clement, no doubt, relieving him of this responsibility.

Arrangements were made with The New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. to have the Pittsfield exchange, 10 miles away, handle the toll calls, which was of benefit to both companies. A trunk line was consequently constructed, connecting the two exchanges.

Rural line service was provided, the rate being \$15 per year. Since then 1, 2, and 4 party services have been added.

The Central Office has been moved only twice, which speaks well of the Company. The first was to Charles Nichols' store and then to Frank Sherrill's residence, where now a two position magneto board dispenses excellent service.

Mr. Jesse H. Fairfield has been identified with the Company from its beginning. In 1910 he was elected Treasurer and has continued to hold this office. He is ably assisted by Mrs. Fairfield, who was appointed Assistant Treasurer in 1938. She has also served as Assistant Secretary. Mrs. Fairfield's father, Sidney Loveland, was the Manager at one time.

The Company has grown steadily. Soon after its opening,

applications for service increased the list to 100, and now 300 are being served.

Years ago, there were several iron mfg. companies here, which dug iron ore from their own mines in Richmond: The Richmond Iron Works, The Cheever Ore Bed, and the Furnace Co.

## CHAPTER 20

### *Holyoke Exchange Area*

THE transfer of the Bay State Telephone Co.'s business to the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. occurred on Oct. 19, 1883, and the Holyoke exchange became a part of the Western Division, with Frank G. Daboll, of Springfield, as Superintendent. Charles B. Perkins was retained as telephone Manager, with offices in the Parsons Hall block, 24 Dwight Street, corner of Race Street.

The growth of the Holyoke exchange was depicted in the Jan. 3, 1884, *Republican*: "The number of telephone subscribers in Holyoke at the beginning of 1884 is 410, with 107 circuits and 125 miles of wire in use. The number of subscribers in May, 1879, was about 20, which had increased to 72, Jan. 1, 1880. During that year it advanced to 152 and from that figure it crept up to 334 Jan. 1, 1882, and reached 365 one year later. The company employs 7 operators and 3 line-men, and the average number of calls a day is 1500, an increase of 200 over a year ago."

The first improvement noted, after the New England Company took charge, was the installation of four new switchboards on March 20, 1884. Each magneto board had connections for 40 wires. They were made by the Western Electric Co. and were considered the best in the market, enabling the four operators to serve the public with less delay than usual.

It is of interest to note that in June of 1884 the High School graduating class numbered 20, 13 boys and 7 girls, the largest in the history of the school.

Pole lines were receiving more attention from the manage-

ment, larger poles being substituted on some of the lines in order to accommodate more "cross-bars", and allowing the circuits that have too many stations to be divided. The *Republican* reported that the cross-bars for the new line of telephone poles to Northampton Street were painted a lead color and that each bar will accommodate six wires.

The Company announced an increase of rates, effective Oct. 15, 1885, which seemed to produce serious consequences in the 'Paper City.' The *Republican* reported: "The number of telephones which will come out in Holyoke October 15, if the rates are increased, has reached 250, which include 25 manufacturers, and it is likely that a public meeting will be held early next week. W. J. Denver has been in the city for the past two days interviewing the subscribers."—William J. Denver had joined the New England Company on Aug. 1, 1885, as Assistant General Manager, at Boston.

The new rates, however, went into effect according to schedule, and it was reported that 255 subscribers had served notice to have their instruments removed and also the wires from their premises.

On Nov. 30, 1885, the *Republican* quoted the manager as follows: "Manager Perkins of the telephone exchange says that he has 200 telephones in use and the number is increasing. He thinks that within six months most of the instruments recently taken out will be put back." Evidently the prediction proved to be true, because no further mention of the trouble could be found in the papers.

A scene, familiar to many, is depicted by the *Republican*: "The work of setting the new 60-foot telephone poles attracts much attention. A gang of 15 men are employed, and they raise the ungainly poles a little at a time, using long poles with pikes in the end, till the big poles are in position, when they form a circle around the bottom, holding it in place with their poles till it is firmly planted."

The introduction of cables to Holyoke was described in the Oct. 22, 1885, *Daily Republican*: "These are busy days with the telephone people, a force of 15 or 20 men being busy putting up the new cables. The cable is being strung on the huge poles lately erected on Dwight and other principal streets.

The cable consists of a hollow tube of composition metal, in which are 52 copper wires about the size of a fine steel needle. These wires are wound with cotton, incased in paraffine, and are packed very closely in the tube. The cable is suspended on a large guard-wire by means of hooks, which are attached to it about two feet apart. The wires will be removed from many of the buildings as soon as the cables are in working order. The poles, which are 60 feet high, will raise the cables above the roofs of the mills thus preventing injury from snow slide and affording ample room for the raising of ladders in case of fire. It is claimed the service will be much improved when the changes are made. The poles are to be painted as soon as the wires are strung."

Charles B. Perkins resigned the Managership of the Holyoke office in late 1886 or early 1887, when he joined his brother, George F. Perkins, formerly Telephone Manager, who had entered the electrical business in Holyoke. Charles was spoken of as a tireless, energetic worker, with an enviable reputation throughout Western Mass.

Melville Hutchins was appointed the next Manager. He entered the employment of the Boston & Northern Telephone Co. Oct. 9, 1882, as gang foreman, previous to which he was building telegraph lines. In 1883, under the New England Telephone Co., he was transferred to Pittsfield and built the Pittsfield-Great Barrington line, opening the first exchange in Great Barrington. In 1884 he went to Springfield, as Line Foreman. At that time most of the telephone lines were strung along housetops.

Walter A. Whitman became the Manager at Holyoke in 1888, following Melville Hutchins, who went to Springfield as Superintendent of Construction.

Robert W. Woodward succeeded Manager Whitman in 1890, and in 1892 Frederic E. Waring was appointed to the position.

A further step in Holyoke's telephone progress was recorded in the Holyoke *Transcript* of May 20, 1893: "To Manager Waring of the central telephone office is due a most successful exhibition of the long distance that sound can traverse impelled by electricity. The Colonial room in the new Y. M. C. A.



building was the office central. The receiving board was the very latest development of modern invention. At 8 o'clock Manager Waring made the connection, and Mayor Farr formally opened the conversation, using the same transmitter that Governor Russell and his staff used when they talked across the country some weeks ago. Mayor Farr sat at the table and asked Manager George Allen of Chicago, 1160 miles away, what time it was in Chicago. Those listening at the twenty-one receivers heard the answer come back distinctly that it was three minutes past seven. It was five minutes after eight by Mayor Farr's watch. The words from Chicago were very distinctly heard. This long distance service costs regularly at the rate of \$10 for five minutes."

Napoleon Goudreau entered the service at Springfield in 1893 as a lineman, and the next year was transferred to the Holyoke-Northampton-Greenfield District. He continued working in Holyoke and surrounding towns.

The telephone office in 1893 was moved from 24 Dwight Street, corner of Race Street, to the second floor of the Park National Bank Building, 272 High Street, corner of City Hall Ct. This property gave way in 1906 to the eight story J. R. Smith store and office building; now known as the Prew Building.

Gilbert R. Payson became Manager of the Holyoke exchange in 1897, replacing Frederic E. Waring.

Manager Payson moved to Springfield in 1899, and Carl M. Pihl was appointed Manager in his place.

Evidence of Holyoke's progressiveness is contained in the *Daily Republican* of Aug. 4, 1899: "An agreement was made yesterday by which the City is to be supplied with a police telephone system of 25 boxes for the use of the police department. The whole expense will be about \$400 a year.

"It was brought about after repeated consultations between Mayor Chapin, City Solicitor Green and Manager Pihl of the Holyoke central office. The switchboard will probably be located in the main office at the Station, and will require a man's full time to tend to it. So far 24 boxes have been arranged for."

In 1899, Harold E. Hughes, Chief Operator, was transferred

to Greenfield as Manager. He was born in Hughesdale, R. I., in 1865 and was appointed Chief Operator at Holyoke in 1898.

Paul H. Koehler, Jr., a native of Holyoke, was appointed Chief Operator. He entered the employ of the Company in 1897 as a Collector, and the next year joined the Traffic force as an Operator.

Patrick J. Begley was employed as night operator, when fourteen years of age, to compensate for the loss at the switchboard of operator Koehler.

There were 750 subscribers in the Holyoke exchange July 25, 1899.

A story from Topics follows: The railway supervisor of a Western line received the following note from one of his foremen:

“I am sending in the accident report on Casey’s foot, when he struck it with the spike maul. Now under ‘Remarks’, do you want mine or do you want Casey’s?”

James Campbell was appointed Station Foreman of the Holyoke district in 1900. “J. C.” was first employed in Springfield as Groundman on April 14, 1891. In May, 1892, he was transferred to Lowell and in 1893 he was promoted to Sub-Foreman with headquarters at Worcester. In 1896, he was made Foreman of a floating crew assigned to the Lowell district, where he remained until his promotion to the Paper City.

The Hampden County Automatic Telephone Co. was organized in 1900 by a company which controlled the Strowger System. Petitions were presented for franchises in Springfield and Holyoke. A hearing was granted by the Holyoke Board of Aldermen, at which the Company’s lawyer gave a history of the System and a description of its workings, and invited the Board to take a special electric car and visit the System in working at Springfield. (A switchboard had been installed for demonstration.) It was learned that it would cost \$100,000, perhaps more, to equip Holyoke; that several Holyokers were approached to buy stock, but none were willing to subscribe unless a franchise were granted; also, that a franchise had been granted in Fall River five months ago and nothing had been done. After due consideration, the Franchise Committee rec-

commended that the Company be given leave to withdraw its petition, which was accepted by the Board of Aldermen. (The trouble was, the Company did not have the System perfected at this time.)

May 28, 1901, *Daily Republican*: "Bids will be opened to-day at Boston for the erection of the new central telephone exchange at the corner of Maple and Suffolk Streets. The new exchange board will be a visual signal, open battery, multiple section board, in other words, the system in use in Springfield will be adopted, it not being necessary to call central by ringing the bell—taking the receiver off the hook does that. This lights a little lamp on the board and this calls the attention of the operator to the call. The multiple board allows an operator answering to make connection with any subscriber, and facilitates rapid work, being very much faster than the present system. All the present telephones in use, 1050 in all, will be replaced by the new ones.

"The new building is to be of light brick and two stories high, including a spacious basement with high ceiling. In this basement are the rooms for the repair and trouble men, regular construction gang, the engine and dynamos, etc. On the first floor, at some distance from the street level, are the public offices, the offices of the Manager, Cashier, Book-keeper and Collectors, and here are stationed the three booths for pay station service. The operating room is on the second floor, and there are retiring rooms for the operators.

"The walls and ceilings are handsomely tinted and excellently finished."

Patrick J. Begley was appointed Chief Operator of the Holyoke Exchange about 1902, at the age of eighteen. While serving as Night Operator a couple of years, he gained a knowledge of switchboard repairing from observation and study. He was put on the installing and repairing of telephones for about a year, and then received this notable appointment.

Harry L. King was employed in the Holyoke Exchange about 1902 and became a Foreman in 1913. He served for many years in this capacity, with credit to himself and the Company.

The Holyoke office was cut over to the Common Battery

system on Sept. 13, 1902. An account of this important event was given in the *Republican*:

“In less than 45 seconds the 1200 subscribers of the Holyoke telephone system were transferred from the old system, to the new system. F. G. Daboll was stationed at the Chief Operator’s desk in the new room, and C. M. Pihl, the Holyoke Manager, was at the old office. At 9:30 Mr. Daboll notified Mr. Pihl that all was ready at the new building, and the latter got in communication with the men in charge of cutting over. The “heating coils” were pulled out at the old office and word was sent over to the new office to cut in the new lines. The noise in the room suddenly quieted, and in a few seconds the first light flashed in the new switchboard,—a call for 545-3. This was followed by another and another and the waiting men of the construction force answered, finding all connections good, and in a few minutes the girls were given the positions, where they remained for some little time for practice.

“Present were H. S. Hyde of Springfield, Vice-President of the Company; Dr. Parker of Lowell, member of the Executive Committee; Thomas C. Wales of Boston, Chief Engineer; George H. Dresser of Boston, General Supt. of Construction (outside and inside); F. G. Daboll, Division Supt. of Springfield; Melville Hutchins, Supt. of Construction; C. M. Pihl, local Manager; and a few invited guests.

“The apparatus was installed by W. D. K. Taylor of Boston, who was also present.

“In 1892 Holyoke had about 335 subscribers, while today, 1200 telephones are in use, 700 are business ’phones and 500 are residence.”

Patrick J. Begley relinquished his duties as Chief Operator in 1905, with the idea of entering the testing department of the General Electric Co. at Schenectady, which Manager Pihl had done prior to coming to Holyoke. Openings, however, were scarce, so “Pat” went to work for the Hudson River Telephone Co., at Albany, installing switchboards in its territory for about four years.

Joseph F. Griffin reported for work in Holyoke April 1, 1906, and began his telephone career as a Collector.

Manager Pihl ended his Managership of the Holyoke Exchange Aug. 13, 1906. He was a proficient and popular Manager, having remained in Holyoke eight years.

Frederick P. Langmaid was transferred to Holyoke as Manager Aug. 13, 1906. He entered the employ of the Company in 1888, as a messenger boy somewhere about Boston and shortly after was advanced to Night Operator. Later he became a Traveling Inspector and held this position until April 23, 1899, when he was appointed Manager at Beverly. On July 23, 1900, he became Manager of the Concord, N.H., exchange.

In 1907 James W. Kidder came to Holyoke for about a year as Chief Operator and then was transferred to Boston.

Charles W. Chamberlain, Chief Inspector at Holyoke, was appointed Manager at Palmer in September, 1907, taking the place of Ralph J. Eldridge.

Robert E. Wiggin began his work for the Company in Holyoke about 1907. His first telephone experience occurred in 1903, when he was a night operator in Penacook, N.H. Upon graduation from high school in 1905, he enlisted as a night operator in Concord, and in a year or so he came here as an Installer and Repairman.

In May, 1907, the first Telephone Topics Magazine was issued, which has been published monthly without interruption.

The Operating Reorganization which took effect Aug. 1, 1908, established the three different departments,—Commercial, Plant and Traffic. The Springfield District heads were: L. B. Stowe, Commercial Manager; A. McAulay, Plant Chief; R. O. Nickerson, Traffic Chief.

F. P. Langmaid, the Manager at Holyoke, was transferred to Greenfield, as the Greenfield District Manager, in connection with this reorganization.

W. R. McComsey became the new Telephone Manager, Aug. 1, 1908. Mr. McComsey came from Marlboro, N.H., in 1905, where he had been doing rural canvassing. He canvassed in Chesterfield, Worthington and other places prior to the establishment of Agency Class F Offices.

Miss Edith H. Harkness was appointed Chief Operator at Holyoke in August, 1908, having started as an Operator just two years previously.

H. A. Knowles, the former Chief Operator, was transferred to service inspection.

Byron B. Britton, a Testman at Springfield, was transferred to Holyoke in 1908, to take the position of Wire Chief. Just before this transfer, B. B. B. married a young lady from New Hampshire, which, of course, was disappointing to the feminine portion of the Holyoke Exchange. In about three years he was transferred to Boston.

H. R. Leathers, formerly Special Agent of the Worcester District was transferred to the position of Manager of the Holyoke Exchange in February, 1909.

April, 1909, Topics: The Flying Squadron, in charge of William Hirshson, who are making a canvass to change six-party residence subscribers to special and two-party lines, have already made about 200 changes to the better grade of service.

Roland E. Moriarty was appointed Testman in 1910. Roland applied for work at the age of fourteen, and was told by Manager McComsey to report for duty on Monday, which was June 6, 1908. His title was 'Office Boy', but, evidently, he worked more for "Jim" Leisenring on the test board than he did for the Manager, because, when "Jim" got through two years later, Roland was put in his place as Testman.

Contract Agent Emerson, in May, 1911, closed a hotel branch exchange contract with the Hotel Hamilton for 70 stations and with Casper Ranger, a large Holyoke Contractor, for 11 stations.

Miss Mary A. O'Donnell started her telephone career as an Operator in the Holyoke Exchange Sept. 2, 1912.

Patrick J. Begley, who had returned to Holyoke in 1910, after doing various kinds of telephone work in Albany, Boston, Vermont and Springfield, was appointed Testman in 1912.

Feb. 3, 1913, Edith H. Harkness was appointed Toll Chief Operator at Springfield. Miss Harkness had been serving as Holyoke Chief Operator since August, 1908.

Miss Alice V. Feeney was appointed Chief Operator, taking

the place of Miss Harkness. Miss Feeney started as an Operator Oct. 1, 1902.

Miss Blanche A. Feeney, a sister of Alice, had been working as an Operator since about 1906, and Irene L. Feeney, another sister, later chose the Commercial Dept. to show there was no favoritism.

Herbert Willis Emerson was appointed Manager at Holyoke during July, 1913. He was reared in Lynn and took a course in electrical science with the Thompson-Houston Co., a firm afterwards merged with the General Electric Co. Mr. Emerson came to the New England Telephone Co. in 1902 and specialized in PBX construction with George W. Conway, taking full charge of the entire New England territory outside of Boston. Later he had the Western Division in his charge and made many important contracts with subscribers, one of the earliest being a PBX for the Springfield *Republican* which hitherto had had single telephone lines.

A party was described by Topics of Jan., 1914: "A private dance and social was given at the Hotel Hamilton ball room by Holyoke telephone employees. During the intermission, a concert was given by the young ladies. A quintette composed of the Misses Savoy, Finn, O'Donnell, Rohan and Brown, Operators in the local exchange, sang 'Carmena' and the 'Boat Song'. A violin selection was rendered by Miss Elizabeth Anderson, a reading by Miss Ruth Crowley, a vocal solo by Miss Anna Savoy and a dance solo by Miss Leonore Fitzgerald."

Patrick J. Begley was appointed Wire Chief of the Holyoke Exchange in 1915.

Mrs. Margaret E. Grady entered the Company in April, 1917, at Holyoke. She later held the various positions of Operator, Junior Supervisor, Supervisor, Central Office Instructor and Acting Chief Operator in the Holyoke office, before being transferred to Springfield.

Robert E. Wiggin was appointed Testman in 1918. Soon after "Bob" came to Holyoke in 1907, John Armstrong, who was Central Office Repairman, went to Springfield. "Bob" took over this work and continued with it until his recent appointment.

The Telephone Company lost a valued employee; from Topics of June, 1920: "George W. Learned, popularly and affectionately known as 'Pop' Learned, died May 8, at his home, 62 Pearl Street, Holyoke.

"Mr. Learned entered the telephone business in 1902, at which time he engaged in contract work at Boston, and maintained an unbroken record of service for eighteen years. In 1906 he was transferred to the Western Division at Springfield and later moved to Holyoke, where he lived and worked for twelve years. He was loved by all who knew him. Mr. Learned possessed a genial, kindly disposition. His son, George, is located with the Company at Boston as Office Manager of the North Suburban District."

Miss Alice V. Feeney, Holyoke Chief Operator, was given a surprise party on Oct. 1, 1922, in honor of the completion of twenty consecutive years of service. Miss Feeney entered the employment of the Telephone Company on Oct. 1, 1902, as an Operator. The entertainment committee was in charge of Miss Mary McCearn and Miss Anna Dowd. Miss Beatrice Beauregard had charge of the decorations.

Miss Cecilia I. O'Donnell reported for duty in the Holyoke Business office April 16, 1923. Her sister Mary was Assistant Chief Operator, but "Ceil" chose the commercial office because her friend, Irene Feeney, worked there, and once, when she stopped to see "Rena," Manager Emerson, detecting a likely prospect, asked her if she wouldn't like to work there. She first learned the clerical work and then was made a stenographer.

Miss Julia Finn, of the Holyoke Traffic Force, was appointed Division Instructor succeeding Miss Marguerite F. Parker, appointed District Chief Operator of the Vermont District. Miss Finn entered the employ of the Company in Holyoke in June, 1913, and has held the positions of Clerk, Supervisor, and Central Office Instructor.

About 1923 the Holyoke Exchange was taken into the Northampton District, which had been organized Jan. 1, 1921, to include the Northampton and Greenfield areas. The Commercial Departments were not included in the District Organization.



One of the liveliest service committees in the Western Division, according to Topics of November, 1924, is located at Holyoke and since they were appointed they have been on the job every minute improving public relations. Many subscribers have visited the office through the efforts of the committee and now have an entirely different impression as the result of their visit. When a service committee functions as Holyoke's does, many fine results are accomplished. Miss Mary A. O'Donnell is Chairman of the Committee.

Another diversion from the cares of business was depicted by Topics of Sept., 1905, under the title—Hail, Hail, the Gang's all Here! "Not one of the Northampton and Holyoke Commercial Employees was absent from their party held a short time ago at Lafayette Lodge, Worthington. "Dinner, amid a profusion of color from streamers and balloons, was served at 8 P.M.

"Headliners on the entertainment program included Helene Goerner, of Northampton, at the piano, and Maude Willis, of Northampton, with a witty poem in which everyone came in for a good-natured rub. Mable Reid, of Holyoke, gave a novelty dance in costume, and was followed by a selection from the Silent Quartet of Holyoke."

The Northampton District was discontinued Sept. 1, 1926, and the Holyoke and Northampton areas reverted to the Springfield District.

Mary A. O'Donnell, Chief Operator of the Holyoke Exchange, was transferred to the Northampton Exchange, Feb. 6, 1927, as Chief Operator. Mary started locally as an Operator Sept. 2, 1912, and had advanced to the position of Assistant Chief Operator April 11, 1920. She was promoted to Chief Operator on April 25, 1926, and now leaves her native town with the best wishes of her many friends.

Robert E. Wiggin, Testman at Holyoke, was transferred to the Central Office Equipment Engineers in the Division office at Springfield in 1927.

Russell E. Chase was appointed Testman Feb. 12, 1928. He was employed by the Company July 7, 1915, preferring a telephone career to one in the prevailing paper industry. Under the supervision of Patrick J. Begley, Wire Chief, "Russ" soon

learned the method of cross wiring on the main frame,—where all telephones are connected.

This was when the old No. 1 common battery switchboard was in the building at the corner of Maple and Suffolk streets. “Russ” was next moved to Switchboard Repairman, where his telephone skill was again improved. June 17, 1922, he was transferred to the Engineering Dept. in Boston, and April 14, 1924, he returned to Holyoke as Service Foreman.

Joseph E. Griffin, Collector at Holyoke for many years, was transferred to Springfield in August, 1929, as Supervisor of the Coin Box Dept. “Joe” was elected an Alderman in Holyoke in 1911, and served on that board 42 years. He was President of the Board of Aldermen 15 years.

About 1923 “Joe” started on sales for the first yellow pages of the telephone directory. He was then Commercial Representative. About that time, he was engaged in getting rid of party lines and wall sets. Most of the subscribers were on party lines. Sometimes, in removing wall sets for non-payment, a large piece of the wall came off with the set.

Cecilia I. O’Donnell was appointed Springfield District Commercial Instructor Sept. 2, 1929. She recently had been appointed Cashier of the Holyoke business office.

Bertha Woods was appointed a bookkeeper in the Wire Chief’s office in 1930.

## CHAPTER 21

### *Northampton Exchange Area*

SOON after the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. was formed (October 19, 1883), the *Republican* reported the following: "Manager A. E. Cross, who has been connected with the Northampton Telephone Exchange about three years, has resigned his position to remove to New York. A petition is in circulation among the subscribers that W. H. Coleman be appointed Manager."

The wishes of the subscribers appeared agreeable to the management, the *Republican* of Feb. 25, 1884, stating; "W. H. Coleman, telegraph operator at the Florence depot for several years, has been appointed Manager of the Northampton telephone exchange, taking charge March 1st."

Two new switchboards were put in the central office, and the wires were run into the building through a large cable, which was expected to improve the service.

The next month, night operator Woodruff went to Streeter, Vermont, and was succeeded by A. B. Norton of Westfield.

An endeavor to improve the telephone service was manifested by the new company: "The Company ran more lines to Florence to reduce the number of subscribers on a line, and the new poles were from 30 to 50 feet high, which kept the wires out of the way of trees. The Company is also moving the lines away from the trees and into the open spaces wherever such a change is possible."

An item relative to furnishing new telephone service to a distant community appeared: "In order to get telephone con-

nections with Northampton, the Westhampton people furnish the poles all set up and turn them over to the Company.”

A move of the telephone office was contemplated, according to the *Gazette* of May 26, 1885: “The telephone office is soon to be moved to new quarters over Cook’s Jewelry Store, 110 Main Street (later the E. J. Gare & Son Jewelry). A large pole will be set up close by the walk in front of the store and the wires carried into the building through a tube. A 65-foot chestnut pole will be set near the Northampton bank building on Center street, and the wires strung on it, passing over the elm tree in front of the First Church. The bank people some time ago asked the Company to take the 19 wires off the roof of their building, as they thought the weight of them too great for it to bear.”

A general increase in rates was now promulgated by the Company, and the situation resulting in Northampton was described in the Sept. 1, 1885, *Hampshire Gazette*:—“Today the recently ordered rise in the rent of telephones in the state of Massachusetts takes effect. In the center of this town the increase in rent to business places is from \$40 to \$42 and to private residences from \$36 to \$40 a year. For instruments out of the center in the outlying villages the residence is much greater, and in Williamsburg and Hatfield a telephone will cost about \$60 a year. The New England Telephone Co. which orders this rise claims that it has not paid a dividend for about two years, that its stock is 70% below par, and that it must either get more for its instruments or shut up shop. The Bell Company, of whom it leases instruments and privileges, is claimed to take so much of the cow’s milk that the dependent calf is skin poor. In Williamsburg the telephone takers are Guilford’s Meat Market, Hill’s Grist Mill, Hampshire House, H. L. James’ Mill and L. D. James’ Store, and they all say that they will take the machines no longer for the sum asked.

“In Haydenville, the takers are 5 in number, The Brass Company, Savings Bank, L. D. James, Pierce Larkin, and the Hotel. We are told by two of them that they and the others will not pay the increase. Hatfield has 7 subscribers. The number of takers in Northampton is about 118, 11 in Easthampton,

23 in Florence, 5 in Leeds, and 1 in Hadley and Westhampton.”

The upshot of the controversy was that five subscribers in Hatfield gave up their telephones, two in Williamsburg, three in Haydenville and eight in Northampton. It was necessary to reduce expenses by the dismissal of one of the day operators.

Another sport indulged in at this time was chronicled in the *Republican*: “The Center and Florence croquet players will begin a series of nine games tomorrow afternoon for the local championship. Dr. J. W. Davenport, E. S. Barrett and F. L. Tower will represent the Center, with L. P. Bryant, G. A. Beals and E. Kirby from Florence.”

Lest the mode of living in 1885 be forgotten, an item from the November 3rd *Republican* is quoted: “The horse-railroad company began yesterday running on the winter time table, with 20 trips each way daily and 2 additional trips Saturday nights. A number of changes have been made to meet the trains from Springfield.”

Another improvement was recorded in the *Republican*: “Manager Coleman, of the telephone exchange, is connecting subscribers’ instruments with rubber-covered wire.”

Frank G. Messenger, who had been a popular Manager of the Westfield Exchange, succeeded W. H. Coleman as Manager of the Northampton Exchange in 1887.

The extension of the Central Mass. Railroad from Amherst to Northampton was completed on Dec. 19, 1887. In October, the stock of this Company had fallen to \$14 a share, despite the brighter outlook occasioned by this extension. However, a ceremony was conducted to celebrate the momentous event, and the *Gazette* reported the first run: “The first regular passenger train on the Central Massachusetts came in at 8:40 A.M. yesterday. Fifty or sixty people greeted the 125 passengers from Ware and intervening stations.”

Walter F. Tetro, who later was appointed Telephone Agent of the Williamsburg Exchange, provided some first hand information about the Northampton Exchange of these days. Addie Tetro, his older sister, was one of the early operators. A brother, Nelson, was a night operator, from 6 P.M. to 7 A.M. The switchboard was a small two position affair located on the

third floor of the E. J. Gare Jewelry Store Building. Walter used to help his brother Nelson, and he said the streets were lighted by arc lights, and it was almost impossible to speak to Williamsburg or any surrounding towns after dark. Nelson used to get the baseball scores at Springfield by telephone and give them to some stores in Northampton and surrounding towns. Addie married Edward Lancore, and their two sons, Edward and Howard, worked for the Telephone Company at Springfield.

An idea of how the telephone wires adorned Main Street is given in the *Hampshire Gazette* of Oct. 31, 1893: "Ninety one telephone wires converge on the pole at the corner of Main and South Streets. It is the meeting of all the wires in the city. It makes a huge network of wires, and, as the stranger said of our Main Street, 'it really looks as though we did something here.' Well, we do. We are a big place, and going to grow right along."

About 1894, the telephone office was moved from the Gare Jewelry Store Bldg., 110 Main Street, to the Columbian Block, 160 Main Street, corner of Old South Street.

Chesterfield is mentioned in the *Hampshire Gazette* of July 16, 1895: "The Chesterfield telephone business is progressing finely and will soon be completed. The central office will be at Wm. Baker's Store and branch offices at West Chesterfield, F. A. Bryants, the new summer home of Mr. Williams of Northampton, Dr. A. M. Belden and Horatio Bisbee." Chesterfield was getting its first telephone line from Northampton, with a telephone at Baker's Store, for the use of the public, and at four other premises.

The opening of the Amherst Exchange occurred on Oct. 18, 1895, which was described in the *Gazette*: "The local office of the New England Telephone Exchange at J. W. Kellogg's store is now in running order. Miss Nellie White is the operator in charge and the following is the present list of subscribers connected." There followed a list of 37 names.

Easthampton was the next town in the Northampton Area to be provided with a central office. The *Gazette* of Dec. 5, 1895, enlightened its readers as follows: "The contractors for the local circuit of the New England Telephone Exchange

were made at L. N. Baldwin's Store, 33 Main Street, Wednesday. (This was later Donovan's Shoe Shop.) There are nearly 30 subscribers. It is expected that instruments will be tested and everything be in working order in a short time."

Dec. 7, 1895, is the date of the opening of the Easthampton Exchange. It was reported that the service was from 7 o'clock in the morning until 6 at night and gave a list of 28 subscribers. The Northampton city business directory listed Lyman N. Baldwin as an insurance, boot and shoe dealer and to add to his versatility he was also listed as telephone Manager. The *Gazette* later referred to this first exchange as follows: "The board wasn't larger than a woman's bread board. A few cords ran to and from it, and Mrs. Baldwin's pleasant voice and that of her sister, Mrs. Richardson, will always be remembered with their constant courtesies and favors. Henry Partridge and his quick deftness in locating trouble, and his eager readiness to serve you, are recalled with them."

More news appeared in the *Gazette* of Dec. 13, 1895, regarding the Amherst Exchange: "The telephone Exchange will soon be moved to a room in Dickinson's Block. Mrs. Nella B. Root will be the operator in place of Miss Nellie White, resigned. The telephone wires are to be so arranged that there will be no difficulty in the night service because of induction by electric wires."

An item in the *Gazette* says that people in our sister towns don't see how Worthington gets along without the telephone and that an effort will soon be made to get it. Then on May 5, 1896, it was reported that the telephone line had been staked out from West Chesterfield to Worthington Center. On May 25, the next year, an extension from Worthington Center to South Worthington was staked out and on June 15 there remained but 15 poles to be set.

Chemistry Teacher—"Now what can you tell me about nitrates?"

Student—"Please, sir, they are cheaper than day rates."

A tiny box switchboard was installed in Belchertown Jan. 21, 1896. Mrs. Harry Sessions, whose husband became the Agent of the Belchertown Exchange in 1913, said that this branch switchboard was placed in a hotel belonging to Louis

W. Dillon, which was situated just beyond the end of the Common, going towards Amherst. It was connected to the Amherst central office, which handled its toll business. Mr. Dillon's daughter, Emma, attended the board from 7 in the morning till 9 at night. The Exchange was in the nature of a branch office, Mr. Fay being in charge of the Amherst office.

About the time that Alexander Proctor was promoted to the managership of the Northampton Exchange, succeeding Frank G. Messenger, the following item appeared in the April 7, 1896, *Hampshire Gazette*: "A petition to the New England Telephone Co. has been signed by over 100 subscribers, asking that the Easthampton and Amherst Exchanges be connected with the Northampton Exchange and that no toll charge be made for service between these exchanges. People of Springfield are allowed to talk with Chicopee and Holyoke free of charge." The toll charge referred to was 15 cents.

The Company's reply to this petition was published in the May 5, 1896, issue: "Jasper N. Keller, Manager of the Bell Telephone Co. in New England, refuses to grant the request of Mayor Field and others that Amherst and Easthampton may be communicated with free by Northampton telephone users. He writes to Mayor Field that the Company has established local exchanges at Amherst and Easthampton at "low rates", and this low rate prevents the free interchange of messages. He concludes, "It will, I trust, be understood that I regret not being able to comply with the request of yourself and other subscribers."

May 26, 1896, the *Gazette* paid quite a compliment to Manager Proctor: "The telephone exchange has nearly 230 instruments, and the increase is about 2 a month. Manager Proctor is an excellent man for the Company, and no Manager was more pleasing to the subscribers. He keeps the lines and instruments in good order, and is very pleasant in a position which offers many opportunities for the display of impatience. Williamsburg is asking for a home exchange, under the \$24 a year rate and pay for all messages sent out of the villages."

The courteous reply of President Keller to Mayor Field did not seem to end the rate dispute, as far as Amherst was concerned. A later *Republican* resumed the story: "Overtures



were soon made by the dissatisfied Amherst patrons to the Company operating an exchange in Northfield.

“The Northfield Telephone Co. finally agreed to furnish them service if 50 subscribers were first secured. They were obtained, a franchise secured from the Amherst selectmen and the work of putting up the poles and wires began in October, 1896. The Exchange was opened in November, the prices charged being \$15 a year or \$25 if a subscriber had two instruments, one each in his house and office.

“The New England Company reduced its rate to \$12 a year for all its instruments in town. The bills are made out at the rate of \$33. a year and a rebate of \$1.75 per month allowed. Continuous service was soon added. The New England Company got more subscribers—150 by January, 1898. It was fortunate in having for its local manager Mrs. Nella B. Root. The Northfield Company had 75 subscribers, a decrease from the previous month. Their service has not been all that could be wished; but as good as that of the New England Company in the early history of its local exchange.”

It was with some surprise that Amherst people read in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* of Jan. 25, 1898: “E. S. Bardwell, Treasurer of the Northfield Telephone Co., notified the Amherst Company Monday that they had sold the Amherst Exchange to the New England Telephone Co. for \$3500.” The Amherst Co., spoken of, was formed two weeks previously to buy the plant for \$4,000, and 88 subscribers had bought stock amounting to nearly \$3,000.

The final article about this episode is from the June 15, 1898, *Republican*: “Representatives of the New England Telephone Co. are in town (Amherst) and have announced that the rates of the instruments after July 1 will be \$33 for residences and \$36 for offices and stores. This is a reduction from the rates charged before the present low rates went into operation, when \$39 and \$42 was charged.”

A telephone booth was installed in the Enfield Hotel in 1897, with a direct wire connection with the Northampton Exchange. A few months later this telephone was transferred to the E. H. Howe General Store, where a Class F exchange was opened later, with Mr. Howe as Agent.

William H. Shea started his telephone career in Northampton March 1, 1900, as a night operator.

Leroy F. Rodimon was employed as night operator of the Easthampton Exchange in 1901.

The Easthampton Exchange was moved to upstairs in the Newkirk block Nov. 26, 1901. Night service was instituted Dec. 1st. It was advantageous in fire protection, there being a telephone at the engine house, and a fireman there nights.

An instrument was placed in the Half-way house on Mt. Holyoke, and the people of Hockanum have established a private line between there and the house of Hiram Barrus, who will deliver messages.

About 1905 the New England Co. started to establish central offices in towns previously dependent on rural lines. These Class F exchanges were conducted by Telephone Agents.

Williamsburg appeared to be the first such exchange in the Northampton Area. An item in the *Daily Gazette* of Jan. 3, 1905, told of telephone wires being strung along South Street that week, and that instruments were to be set up in the houses.

Frank A. Brooks was engaged to be the telephone Agent of this exchange. He came from Pittsfield about 1887, and at first was a mail clerk on the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, which had its terminus at Williamsburg. In 1894 he started an express business between Williamsburg and Northampton. The switchboard was placed in his house on North Street, the second house on the right from Main Street.

On Jan. 11, 1905, the *Daily Gazette* continued with this item: "Those hiring telephones with a central office at Larkins in Haydenville have been connected with the line having its central office at F. A. Brooks." R. F. Burke, an old time resident of Williamsburg, said that a small switchboard had been installed in this store in the early 1880's to serve both Haydenville and Williamsburg. It had three lines, one of which connected with the Northampton central office. This store was on South Main Street, the second building south of the fire station, and this switchboard was, no doubt, a branch system connected to Northampton.

The opening of the new Williamsburg Exchange occurred

Jan. 14, 1905, the *Gazette* reporting that about 40 of the new instruments which were installed were now in working order and that the line was being kept busy by everybody.

The threat of a rival telephone company in Northampton was described in the *Gazette* of Jan. 16, 1905: "Although but little has been said in the papers recently about the progress of the Citizens Independent Telephone Co. of Williamsburg, work has been going on steadily and the instruments which have been installed are now in working order. Those who take it in this part of town (Williamsburg) are Bisbee Bros., G. M. Bradford and C. R. Damon. It is understood that there are 35 or 40 subscribers in Haydenville, and as soon as people begin to realize that it is a good thing for them to have, many more will be added."

R. F. Burke, who was construction manager of this company but who in 1948 conducted a general store in Williamsburg, said the company was organized May 1, 1905, with a capitalization of \$10,000, not all paid in, by a group of Williamsburg and Haydenville men and their attorney of Northampton. He displayed one of the Company's letter heads which listed the following officers: A. S. Hills, President; E. W. Goodhue, Vice President; Byron Loomis, Treasurer; S. Jorgensen, Clerk; Louis H. Warner, Attorney; R. F. Burke, Construction Manager; and Edward T. Barrus, General Manager.

Mr. Burke said a little box switchboard was fastened to a wall in the residence of Thomas Dumphy to which were connected three wires. Mr. Dumphy's residence was on Main Street, Haydenville, just above the railroad crossing and still stands, apparently unimpaired by the wear and tear of the telephone business.

Mr. Goodhue, according to Mr. Burke, had moved here from Vermont, and his account of a thriving telephone company up there prompted them to embark in the business here. Instruments and equipment were purchased from C. S. Knowles, Boston. Good transmission was provided by keeping their lines away from electric light lines and transposing their metallic circuits. He thought his company would charge \$15 a year.

A franchise to conduct an exchange in Northampton was

obtained and pole line locations were granted through Leeds and Florence and thence down Prospect Street to State Street. The company also obtained locations for conduits on State Street and Elm Street, and set 25 foot poles to the Hatfield line to connect with the Heath Telephone Co., which had extended a line in West Whately down to this point.

After expending about \$3,000, the owners of this independent company began to question the wisdom of risking additional capital. The options for their rights of way in Northampton were allowed to expire before any wire was strung and, according to Mr. Burke, they finally sold their business to the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. for \$1,000.

A personal telephone item graced the columns of the *Hampshire Gazette* and *Northampton Courier*, still being published as a weekly paper: "Leslie D. Foss, who has been with the New England Telephone Co. for a number of years, has severed his connection with the Company. The work which he has been doing, placing lines in the farming districts, will be continued for the present by W. McComsey of Marlboro, N. H., who has been doing similar work for the same Company."

Cummington appeared to be the next community to have a Class F exchange. The first inkling was disclosed by the *Gazette* on Aug. 1, 1905: "Work on the telephone line progresses well. The central office will be in the F. V. Bates house, Mr. Bates having sold it to the Telephone Co., for that purpose." The exchange was opened about September, 1905, with Robert A. Daley as Agent.

The telephone management decided that it was now time to provide Northampton with a new telephone building, equipped with a common battery switchboard, thus doing away with the hand cranking. A site was selected on Center Street, and by Aug. 15, 1905, the changing of telephone instruments was underway, which necessitated five visits to every instrument connected with the exchange or a total of 5,000 visits. The girls in the telephone office received instruction by S. F. Parker of Boston, one of the Service Inspectors.

An account of the cutover of the new switchboard, which occurred Aug. 26, 1905, is taken from the *Daily Gazette*: "At 9:30 Saturday night the "cutover" was made in the old tele-

phone office and in four seconds subscribers were calling "Central" by the noiseless method. Many of the subscribers must have been waiting to call "Central" the instant the change was made, for the instant the current was turned on the little tiny electric lights, that call the attention of the Operators, quickly appeared all along the line of the great operating boards. The readiness with which subscribers received attention from the "Central" convinced them the new way was greatly superior.

"The 'cutting over' process was done in the old office and was under the direction of Asa Parker of the Traffic Dept. in Boston, and A. C. Reynolds of the Boston Dept. The 'cutting over' was done simply by pulling the heat coils in the old office and closing the connection in the new office.

"Among the telephone officials present were Everard W. Pinkham of Boston, the architect of the building, and of the Building Dept. of the Company; W. S. Barker of New Haven, of the Bell Telephone Co.; Supt. F. G. Daboll of Springfield; F. C. Buck, Chief Operator of the Springfield Telephone Exchange; K. D. Lippincott of Boston, Chief Service Inspector; George Call of the Engineering Dept., Boston; H. G. Wheeler of the Superintendent's Office of the Northern Division of the New England Company, Burlington, Vermont; August McAulay of the Construction Dept., Springfield; W. A. Parker of Springfield, also of the Construction Dept.; and James Campbell, a Foreman from the Springfield Construction Dept.

"The force of the exchange now consists of the following: Manager, A. Proctor; Bookkeeper, Miss Cora E. Smith; Assistant Bookkeeper, Clara B. Smith; Office Tester, Henry E. Partridge; Collector, Daniel Banister; Outside Man, Frank Wyatt; Man looking for trouble on the lines, Alphonse Goulet; Chief Operator, Rachael Banister: Operators, Emma Wainwright, Margaret Kelly, Tillie Powers, Nellie Barney, Margaret Londergan, Julia Boudway, Grace M. Harris, Bessie Warner, Florence Hillman, Delia Torrey, Mary Lee, Elizabeth Carson, Mary Crafts, substitute; Night Operator, William Shea."

Alphonse Goulet, referred to above, joined a "floating gang" back in the 1890's, with headquarters at Springfield. After

quite a few years of rough and tough going building pole lines, and very seldom coming back to headquarters, he was glad to settle down at Northampton, where he had relatives.

Frank Wyatt was one of the old combination men—a top man, trained to do everything. He was the Manager's right-hand man. "Shooting trouble" on toll and local lines kept him away sometimes for several days. He also installed and repaired telephones, set poles, ran wire and repaired the magneto switchboard, if called upon.

The first automobile story to be noted in the *Gazette* was at the time of the telephone move to Center Street.

Clerk: "Let me show you our latest machines. We have an automobile now that can climb any hill on earth."

Chauffeur: "That's nothing. The last one you sold me tried to climb a tree."

Swift River, Cummington, received a visit of some telephone men in September, 1905, who put up the wires for the new line and getting things in readiness to place the telephones in the residences of M. S. Howes, G. W. Guilford and E. F. Parker.

There was excitement in Chesterfield over the prospects of having a telephone exchange. William McComsey canvassed the town securing between 25 and 30 new subscribers. The canvass being considered successful, the Telephone Company, according to the *Gazette* of Jan. 30, 1906, had a large force of men putting up wires and installing the "machines", several already having them in working order.

The Chesterfield Exchange was opened Feb. 6, 1906, in the home of Albert W. Nichols, just south of the Center. Some of his experiences before and during his custody of the Agency are given in the next chapter.

The South Deerfield Operators were kept busy since the connection of Sunderland, Deerfield and Whately. There were 165 subscribers at the beginning of 1906.

It was an agreeable surprise to come upon the following item in the *Hampshire Gazette* of Oct. 17, 1905: "Lawyer and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, who were married last week in Burlington, Vermont, have returned from their wedding trip."

The telephone situation in Belchertown was described in

the *Hampshire Gazette* of Oct. 24, 1905: "The long wished for extension of telephone service to Pratts Mill near the headwaters of "Jabish" and also to the residence of W. B. Kimball, beyond the mill, has lately been completed and now Belchertown has lines extending south to A. M. Bagg's place, east to Enfield, north to the Kimball place and west to the railroad. The Granby Telephone & Telegraph Co. covers the southwest section of the town, known as the 'Turkey Hill Section'.

Further mention of the Turkey Hill Section was made in the *Daily Gazette* of April 26, 1906: "The telephone extension in Belchertown is assuming quite large proportions. The Turkey Hill line with 16 or more subscribers has been sold to the New England Company, and the lines are being extended to connect with the central in Belchertown. It is understood that there will be an extension of the lines from "Pine Hill" toward the South Amherst road."

On June 12, 1906, the same paper spoke of the moving of the branch office in Belchertown from Mr. Dillon's hotel to the newly fitted quarters not far away: "The office was moved to the A. M. Baggs & Son building over the C. H. Snow Drug Store. Miss Mabel Shaw has charge of the central office for day service and Mason Sanford is the night Operator. Belchertown has nearly 100 telephone subscribers now.

North Hadley furnished quite a rush of business, according to the *Daily Gazette* of Feb. 26, 1906: "The New England Telephone men were busy Saturday putting in instruments and making connection. On their list for the day were the names of H. C. Russell, J. W. Lane, J. W. White, James Parent, R. H. Hibbard, E. H. Blodgett, Thomas Gerry, Arthur C. Howe, J. W. Clark, J. R. Hibbard, J. H. Lasalle, W. A. Wilson, W. A. Stockwell and W. H. Comins. The name of O. W. Prouty and perhaps others are to be added. It was said connection with Northampton would be made by Monday afternoon."

Hatfield was the next township that was deemed suitable for a switchboard. A report of the main features of this new exchange was given in the *Daily Gazette* of March 3, 1906: "The New England Telephone Co. has almost completed the work of putting in its new lines and instruments and expects to

have the Hatfield Exchange in full working order next Wednesday. This exchange will include the whole township,—the Center, Bradstreet, West Hatfield and North Hatfield. The Company has 39 new subscribers, which bring the total in town up to nearly 70. The central office is to be located in the house of Mrs. Emma D. Webber, 41 Main Street, and the Operators will be members of the Webber family. There will be all night service. Forty lines will enter the central office. The rate to Northampton is to be five cents.”

According to the above article, the Hatfield Exchange was opened March 7, 1906. An item in the April 3rd *Gazette* refers to the subscribers having received their books and there being 62 numbers in the Hatfield list.

Mrs. Nellie R. Donlin provided the recollections of her long Agency in Hatfield which have been embodied in a narrative appearing in the next chapter.

Doctor (after examination) “Madam, you have a constitution of iron.”

Obese patient: “I have often wondered what made me so heavy.”

In the fall of 1905, William R. McComsey spent two or three weeks in Worthington and secured about 50 applicants for service to a local exchange.

The New England Telephone Co. was encouraged by the results of the canvass to proceed with the establishment of an exchange, and the *Hampshire Gazette* of Jan. 9, 1906, reported that the company had a gang of men at work setting poles in this vicinity.

A pert Worthington item appeared March 10th: “The new neighborhood telephone will be in gossiping condition very soon as the wires are nearly all up.”

The Worthington Exchange was opened in the store of Horace S. Cole about the latter part of March, 1906. A village type wall board was installed in a little room in the back of the store, and another board was put in the Cole residence, to be used nights and during an unusual rush of business. Mr. Cole had charge of the Agency.

An interesting account of the Worthington Exchange was given by Mrs. Cole, which appears in the next chapter.



The Northampton Exchange had about 1500 subscribers in March, 1906.

Telephone Topics first appeared in May, 1907, and has proved to be all that was hoped for by its founders.

Miss Elsa C. Crandall was Chief Operator in the Easthampton Exchange, according to the Jan., 1908, Topics.

August 1, 1908, the Operating Reorganization took effect, whereby the three different departments were established,—Commercial, Plant and Traffic. The Springfield District Heads were: L. B. Stowe, Commercial Manager; A. McAulay, Plant Chief; R. O. Nickerson, Traffic Chief.

Under the Reorganization, the Amherst Exchange was placed under Alex. Proctor, Commercial Manager at Northampton, Mrs. Nella B. Root, formerly Manager, being made Chief Operator.

Sept., 1908, Topics—Robert A. Davis, who has for some time been in charge of the workshop in Boston, has been in the Western Division making tests on electrolysis. In Northampton a leak of one hundred amperes was found between the tracks of the Amherst Street Railway Co. and our lines. He recommended bonding the tracks of this Company with those of the Northampton Street Railway Co. This work was completed July 28 and has proved successful and satisfactory to us.

Miss Emma Wainwright, who for 12 years was employed at the Northampton Exchange, accepted a position as operator at the PBX of the Florence Mfg. Co., in Florence.

The Telephone Topics of April, 1910, reported that Miss Rachael Banister, Chief Operator of the Northampton Exchange, has resigned after long and faithful service with the Company. Her position has been filled by Miss Ernestine M. Dutilly, formerly Chief Operator of the Palmer Exchange.

About 1911 William H. Shea was appointed Wire Chief of the Northampton Exchange Area. After joining the Company March 1, 1900, "Bill" served as night Operator in Northampton, Brockton, Westfield and Springfield. Returning to Northampton, he did some installation and testboard work, which fitted him for his promotion.

An event of importance to Amherst was cited by the *Republican*; "10:45 Saturday night, March 25, 1911, occurred

the cut over of the Amherst Exchange from the old office on Pleasant Street to its commodious quarters in the new Richmond Block on Main Street. The common battery system has been installed in place of the old magneto. In a very short time the divided ringing system will also be in operation on two-party lines, whereby one half of the subscribers on a line will not hear the bells of the other half. The new switchboard has a capacity of 1500 lines. It now has 500 lines, 302 of which are working. Miss Julia Boudway has been Chief Operator for two years."

In spite of these costly improvements, Miss Boudway resigned on December 30th, preferring married life to single telephone blessedness. Miss Essie E. Wright was promoted from Senior Operator to Chief Operator.

A story apropos of married life is taken from the *Daily Gazette's* columns:

Mrs. Chips: "Why, you're home early tonight, dear."

Mr. Chips: "Yes."

Mrs. Chips: "How cold your feet are."

Mr. Chips: "Yes, I wouldn't have been home so early if it hadn't been for that."

Easthampton had experienced quite a telephone growth during these years, the effects of which were reported in the Oct. 17, 1911, *Daily Gazette*: "The Telephone Company moved into their new quarters in Newkirk's Block October 14, just back of the old rooms in the same building. Inside the rail is the desk of the Chief Operator, Miss Elsa Crandall, the new Western Union Telegraph desk, and the switchboard, which accommodates three operators. In the public enclosure are two private booths each equipped with cabinet desk phones at which the user can sit while telephoning. The men who worked this 24 hour wire-changing stretch were Foreman "Bill" French of Springfield, as overseer, Henry Partridge with "Jack" Caverhill, Herbert Hibbard and Harry Munsey of Springfield and Donald Purcell of Easthampton.

"Henry Partridge in charge of the entire Easthampton circuit plant will have the former operating room as his office. There are about 600 telephones in this circuit which includes Easthampton, Westhampton and Southampton. The East-

hampton force consists of Henry Partridge, in charge of plant; Elsa Crandall, Chief Operator; Etta M. Avery, Misses Ewing, Hanlon and Miller, Operators; and Miss Crowell, Western Union Operator. William Allen, a Williston student, is night Operator of both the telephone and Western Union lines."

On Feb. 7, 1912, the Western Union office at Amherst was taken over by the Telephone Company as a Class 10 joint office, the telegraph operator being located in the office of the commercial department.

James B. Powers joined the Company at Northampton, Nov. 4, 1912. He started in as a Time Keeper and Paymaster in the Construction Department, Ronald Campbell, better known as "Ronney", being Construction Foreman. At that time they had one little, old truck, so "Jim" had quite a few livery stable horses on his payroll. His Boston bag usually bulged with pay envelopes containing between \$2,000 and \$3,000, and he said he tried to look unconcerned as he boarded a trolley car and set the bag between his feet.

"Jim" found time to do some construction work now and then, but it was limited to a Groundman's duties. Linemen, he said, had to climb poles, do the cross arm work and tie in the wires, which required experience.

Ronald Campbell had joined the Company in 1898, working with a 'floating gang', which was constructing pole lines throughout the State. "Ronney" was transferred to Northampton about 1906, and in a few years was appointed Construction Foreman.

Miss Ernestine Dutilly, Northampton Chief Operator, resigned from the Company June 15, 1913. Miss Dutilly started her Traffic experience two days before Christmas, 1905, at the Palmer switchboard. The latter part of January, 1908, she was appointed Chief Operator, and in March, 1910, she left her native town to become Chief Operator of the Northampton Exchange, succeeding Miss Rachael Banister.

The reason for Miss Dutilly's resignation was her approaching marriage to Homer J. Hebert. "Beau", who was Equipment Foreman in Springfield, met Miss Dutilly while installing a toll section in the Northampton office.

Miss Elsa Crandall, Chief Operator at Easthampton, was appointed Chief Operator at Northampton.

Miss Hazel Burnett was employed as an Operator in March, 1907, and later she was appointed Miss Dutilly's Clerk. In September, 1913, Miss Burnett also resigned, the "voice with a smile" having won William H. Shea, the Northampton Wire Chief.

In 1913 it was decided to change the Belchertown office from a branch of the Amherst Exchange to a Class F or Agency office. The Agent selected was Harry E. Sessions, who had been working for the Telephone Company in Springfield, in charge of batteries.

The February Topics quoted the local Belchertown Paper as follows: "The telephone service in Belchertown is rapidly extending and, under the excellent management of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sessions, gives more satisfaction than for some time."

Guy C. Emerson was appointed Acting Manager at Northampton about September, 1914.

Alexander Proctor, who had been Manager of the Northampton Exchange Area for eighteen years, died Feb. 13, 1915, aged 52. He was born in Scotland, came to this country when a young man, where he spent practically all his time in the employment of the New England Telephone Co. Before coming to Northampton he worked five years for the Company in Greenfield. He was also engaged in general telephone work in Northampton two years before becoming Manager.

The *Daily Hampshire Gazette* summed up Mr. Proctor's service as follows: "His efficiency in his work and fitness in every respect led to his advancement to the management of the business here. During his managership, the Exchange grew to a size several times greater than when he became Manager. The excellent service of the Exchange was very largely due to his pleasant relationship with the public and his faithful and conscientious interest in his duties. His geniality and uniform courtesy, the tact in the conduct of the business and obliging nature whenever there was anything to be done in remedying a complaint, and the cheerfulness with which he would always

say, 'I will see to it right off' was characteristic of him to a remarkable degree."

The retirement of Cora E. Smith was announced in Telephone Topics of July, 1915: "After twenty-eight years of service, Cora E. Smith was retired on March 1, owing to ill health. She commenced in December, 1886, as Operator in the Westboro, Mass. Exchange—her native town. Her duties, besides operating, were collecting bills and renewing batteries. She was employed there under John B. Hunt, Manager at Worcester. In November, 1891, she went to Gardner as Operator and part time Bookkeeper under Manager Frank Towey. In July, 1897, Miss Smith was transferred to Northampton as Bookkeeper under the late Alexander Proctor, and in September, 1907, was made Exchange Cashier, in which capacity she was employed up to the time she obtained leave of absence in November, 1914. She has seen the Northampton Exchange grow from less than three hundred subscribers to the neighborhood of three thousand."

The rapid growth of the Northampton Exchange, since the erection of the Center Street building in 1905, necessitated an enlargement of the building eleven years later, according to the Oct. 26, 1916, *Gazette*: "The New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. has started work of building an addition and adding a second story to its central office on Center Street. There are now more than 3400 telephones in Northampton. On the front of the building an addition will be placed 40 feet in length and 14 feet in width. An attractive second story, with a pitched roof and dormer windows, will provide much needed space for the use of the operating force.

"The first floor will be used by the Commercial and Traffic Dept. forces. Among other changes, 5 more positions will be added to the switchboard and Manager Emerson's office will be nearly doubled in size.

"On the second floor there will be a sitting room for the Operators, a locker room, and lunch room."

Margaret Griffin was employed Jan. 5, 1918, and served many years in the Northampton Traffic.

On Nov. 11, 1918, Mr. and Mrs. John Lacey, with their two children, moved to Cummington to take over the Agency.

John had been doing installing and repair work in Northampton since 1910. An account of their experiences in Cummington appears in the following chapter.

“Guy C. Emerson”, according to the Dec. 1919, Topics, “one of the most popular Managers in our territory, and for the past few years Manager at Northampton, resigned to accept a position with the Florence Mfg. Co. Eleven years ago Mr. Emerson became a part of this business of ours, and during that time has made many friends all over our territory.”

John Shaw, Manager at Westfield, was transferred to Northampton to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Emerson’s resignation.

About 1919 the Company began to paint the route numbers on the poles; and “Jim” Powers recalled that he and Edwin F. Harwood walked every line in Cummington, Worthington, Plainfield and Savoy carrying a plane or scraper, brass stencils and a pot of black paint—not to mention the brush.

Walter F. Tetro was appointed Agent of the Williamsburg exchange Nov. 1, 1919, succeeding Frank A. Brooks. Walter, a watchmaker and engraver, worked at his trade in several cities and then came back to Williamsburg and bought the house of his old friend Brooks. Mr. Brooks went with him to see the Manager at Northampton, who O.K.’d him as the new Agent, and therewith had him sign a contract. After that, all his business was with Mr. Dee of the Traffic Department in Springfield.

Hazel Warner was one of the first operators. Mrs. Fred Sanderson and Iva Leonard, now Mrs. Henry Baldwin, were also employees.

Frank Brooks gave up his express business in 1916 when he was appointed Chairman of the Board of Parole by Governor McCall. He was re-appointed by many Governors, and held the office seventeen years.

Another telephone improvement was introduced to Northampton in 1920, which was explained in the *Gazette* of May 19: “The New England Telephone Co. is installing a device by means of which a subscriber will be able to hear what will indicate that the station called for is being rung by the operator. If the person called does not answer promptly the buzzing

tone is repeated as subsequent rings are made. This assures the person calling that his call is receiving attention."

A change of Chief Operators in Easthampton was announced in Telephone Topics: "Mrs. Hattie E. Healy, Chief Operator of Easthampton, who has been with the Company since 1911, has tendered her resignation to take effect May 1, 1920. Mrs. Healey has filled the position as Chief Operator here for the last four and one half years and has discharged her duties loyally and capably.

"Miss Grace C. Rohan was appointed Chief Operator of the Easthampton Exchange. Miss Rohan started her telephone career in July, 1913, as a student and by steady application and consistently good work has reached the position of Chief Operator of her Exchange."

Feb., 1921, Topics—Northampton District Established

To more closely coordinate plant activities within the area as well as on account of the unnatural association of the Greenfield area with that of the Pittsfield District, as it was previously constituted, a new district was established on Jan. 1, 1921.

The new district to be known as Northampton, on account of the location of its headquarters, is made up of the Greenfield Area, from the Pittsfield District, comprising the Exchanges of Greenfield, Turners Falls, Northfield, Bernardston and South Deerfield; and the Northampton Area, from the Springfield District, made up of the Exchanges of Northampton, Easthampton, Amherst, Belchertown, Enfield, Cummington, Worthington, Chester, and Williamsburg.

L. V. Gillis was reported in the Feb., 1921, Topics as being appointed Plant Supervisor of the Northampton District. He joined the telephone ranks in May, 1901, in Ipswich as a Ground Man. He rose steadily in the Plant Department until November, 1906, when he was drafted by the Commercial Dept. from his position of Foreman of Maintenance at Salem, and appointed Manager at Southbridge. In June, 1909, Division Plant Supt. R. H. Keller thought "Gil" would be a fine Chief Clerk, which he did.

William F. Langan was appointed Cable Foreman of the new Northampton District Jan. 2, 1921. "Bill" started his tele-

phone career somewhere in or near New York City May 27, 1906, learning the work of cable splicing. John J. Robinson, who later became President of the New England Telephone Co., was the Cable Foreman for whom he worked. "Bill" moved to New England in a few years and went to work in Worcester for the New England Co. Nov. 4, 1910, on a cable job. Upon its completion the next year, "Bill" was transferred to Northampton. He was a Supply Sergeant in the 401st Telegraph Battalion during his army service, 1917-1919.

Daniel W. Baird was transferred from local Central Office Repairman to District Central Office Foreman Jan. 2, 1921. "Danny" had joined the Company at Northampton in 1905 as an Inspector, advancing to Testman and then Central Office Man. He is reported to have been given the duties of Wire Chief soon after the Reorganization in 1908. Prior to coming with the New England Company, "Danny" worked for the Western Electric Co., and it was while working on the installation of the Northampton Common Battery Office in 1905, that he was offered a position.

Laurence B. Shepherd was Testman during the dynamic days of the Northampton District. "Larry", a native of the Shire Town, went to work as an Installer Oct. 6, 1911. His training consisted of going around with Fred Staples for two months. According to Larry, there were two installation forces in the Springfield District, one supervised by Charlie Lyons, of Springfield, the other coming under Supervisor Alphonse Goulet of Northampton, who looked after the Holyoke, Westfield and Northampton Areas. "Billy" French was the District Installation Foreman. In the Fall of 1915, Larry was brought inside as Clerk to the Wire Chief, William H. Shea. The duties of Clerk, in an office of this size, called for the abilities of a Jack-of-all Trades. Once a week the floor of the Operators' room had to be mopped. Then there was cleaning, attending to the furnace, posting line cards, making out time sheets, helping on the testboard and sometimes clearing switchboard trouble. It was a little later that John Cotter, an ex-Lineman, became Janitor. Larry was appointed Testman about 1917, and also helped with the line assigning, until he was relieved



of the latter duty by William G. Walker, who had spent four years in the Springfield Plant, prior to the war.

An ice storm swept across the middle of Massachusetts on Nov. 27th, 28th, and 29th, 1921, inflicting heavy telephone damage in the hill towns. About two years previously, the Construction Department had replaced the hemlock poles in Cummington, Worthington, Plainfield and Peru with chestnut and cedar poles, and now, alas, the storm took down most of them. In some places ice from 2½ to 4 inches thick formed on the wires.

Seabury R. Colby was appointed the first Northampton District Engineer in 1922. "Zeeke" had joined the Company at Springfield in 1905 and had served as Line Assigner from 1911 to 1919 and as an Engineer until the Northampton appointment.

Carl E. Parker was appointed Northampton District Traffic Manager. He was previously District Traffic Chief at Worcester.

Sometime in 1923, the Officials decided to take the Holyoke Exchange into the Northampton District, which expanded the scope of its operations and called for a larger district organization. The Commercial Department was not included in this District setup, however, but continued to function as before. Offices were secured on the fifth floor of the Central Chambers on Center Street, not far from the Exchange.

Oct., 1923, Topics—Libius V. Gillis has been appointed District Plant Chief for the Pittsfield District. All departments at Northampton united in giving him a "send off". Presents, refreshments and dancing contributed to a very pleasant evening.

Edward J. Quinn, Division Toll Wire Chief of the Western Division, who succeeds Mr. Gillis as Plant Supervisor, came into the telephone business 21 years ago as night Wire Chief for the Southern New England Telephone Co. at New Haven and in 1904 joined the New England Company as a Toll Tester in Boston; then becoming Toll Wire Chief at Worcester in 1905 and in 1914 rising to the position of Division Toll Wire Chief for the Western Division.

October 29, 1923, William H. Shea, Northampton Wire

Chief since 1911, was appointed Special Agent for the Northampton District, attending to claims, pole locations, and city council affairs.

Leslie H. Streeter, Wire Chief at Greenfield, was transferred to Northampton, taking Mr. Shea's place.

Charles Ballou was appointed the Head District Line Assigner, previous to which he was the Wire Chief's Clerk and Line Assigner at Greenfield. Robert H. Dunbar came up from the Division Engineers in 1923 and did the line assigning for the Holyoke Exchange, and Edward Finn, who was employed May 10, 1924, was soon advanced from a Clerk to the Line Assigner for the Northampton Exchange.

Telephone Topics furnished the following: Robert D. Fuller, on Dec. 3, 1923, was appointed Manager at Northampton succeeding John F. Shaw. He was first employed March 17, 1912, as Contract Agent at Worcester and was made Collector there in April 1914. 'Bob' was appointed Manager at Great Barrington in March, 1916. After serving 13 months overseas, he assumed the duties of Commercial Representative in June, 1919, at Springfield, and on December 1st was appointed Manager at Westfield.

Employer (to newly-hired typist): "Now I hope you thoroughly understand the importance of punctuation?"

Stenographer: "Oh, yes, indeed. I always get to work on time."

The Dec., 1923, Topics reported that Safety Instructor Cushing in the Northampton District, had a class of 19 men ready to be examined and also the entire force of the Heath Telephone Co., a sub-license company.

A fire in a building adjoining the Amherst office was discovered at 1:45 A.M. in December, 1923, by Miss Mary Sullivan, Night Operator, who notified the firemen and telephone officials. Wire Chief Bardwell, Supervisor Page, Operators H. Dudley, M. Dudley, and R. Reardon performed in an exemplary manner until the fire was controlled.

In November, 1924, Carl E. Parker, Northampton District Traffic Manager, was transferred to the Division Traffic headquarters at Springfield. He was succeeded by B. A. Curry, who

has been connected with the Commercial and Traffic Depts. since 1922.

In January, 1925, Ralph Dicker, who was District Plant Engineer, was transferred to Vermont in the same capacity, and Clyde T. Hubbard, who was in the Springfield Engineers office, was appointed District Plant Engineer.

Frank McCarthy gave up his position with the Springfield *Union* in April, 1925, and moved from Florence to Longmeadow, where he entered the antique business. He first went to work in the Northampton office of the *Union* in October, 1919, as a combination reporter-photographer. There was hardly a telephone function in the area that Frank did not cover, and his many telephone friends regret to have him leave.

John A. Proctor went to Northampton Sept. 21, 1925, as an "A" Install and Repairman. John started his career June 19, 1922, as an Installer in Springfield, having worked a few summers for the Company, while attending High School in Northampton.

Oct., 1925, Topics—Helen J. Barney, until recently Chief Operator at Burlington, has succeeded Elizabeth Doyle, who has resigned as District Clerk of the Northampton District.

James J. McCarthy was appointed District Plant Engineer, taking the place of Clyde T. Hubbard who was made Springfield District Plant Engineer.

Dec., 1925, Topics—Ralph Beattie has been appointed Traffic Manager at Northampton, succeeding B. A. Curry, recently assigned to the Fitchburg District. Previous to his transfer, Mr. Beattie was in the Eastern Division Traffic headquarters at Portland. Before coming to Portland, he was District Traffic Manager at Lewiston.

About Sept. 1, 1926, the Northampton District was discontinued, the Northampton and Holyoke Exchange areas reverting to the Springfield District, while the Greenfield Area was restored to the Pittsfield District.

William F. Langan was transferred to Springfield Aug. 29, 1926, as District Cable Foreman.

Francis M. Smith was transferred from the Northampton

District Engineers office to that of the Springfield District. Frank recalled that he was given a temporary position at Northampton Aug. 24, 1924, to help with an inventory of outside plant, which was being made throughout the Company to determine the plant valuation, in preparation of a new rate schedule. This was the first complete inventory made, no records having been kept before. The results of this inventory were transferred to forms, made up to cover all types of plant, and constituted the beginning of the Division Record Departments. Before the inventory was completed in 1925, Frank had helped in Vermont and in the headquarters at Boston, which was under the direction of Samuel Cushing. Frank's 'temporary position' has extended to this day.

William H. Shea, Special Agent for the Northampton District, was transferred to the Division Office at Springfield about Sept. 1, 1926, as Special Agent. The Sheas, however, continued to reside in Northampton, where "Bill" has always lived.

James B. Powers was transferred to Worcester Sept. 1, 1926, as Supervisor of Supplies and Motor Vehicles for the Worcester and Fitchburg Districts, this title supplanting that of District Storekeeper.

Laurence B. Shepherd was transferred to Springfield, about the same time, as Transmission Tester, working for Dean Howland, who was Division Transmission Engineer.

Mary A. O'Donnell was transferred to Northampton as Chief Operator Feb. 6, 1927, from Holyoke, where she held the same position.

The July, 1927, Topics announced that E. P. Warner, Manager of the Westfield Office, was transferred to Northampton as Manager, taking Arthur Frosthalm's place.

The Easthampton telephone quarters in the Newkirk Building on Union Street had served their usefulness, and in 1927 work was underway on a new building on Chapman Avenue.

There now follows a classic description of the grand opening of the Easthampton Common Battery exchange on Nov. 18, 1927, from the *Daily Gazette*:

## NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM FLASHES INTO ACTION

“At precisely ten o’clock last evening William F. Coyle, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, pressed a button and in the fraction of a second Easthampton’s new telephone system was in action. A moment before, the Operators at the old switchboard were responding to little shutter and buzzer signals, and then in a flash the new way came in and the old way went out. The new building woke to vivid life and the old dropped to a strange, dead silence, the first time in all the years since it was opened. Manager Warner of Northampton welcomed the assembled party. He said the new system was far more than a fine and wonderfully equipped building, it was a great service and a community asset of wide importance. He gave the signal, Mr. Coyle touched the button and the girls at the new switchboard were busily answering calls. The laymen present had sort of held their breath, as if expecting something sharp and dramatic, but it was all as silent as light itself and as swift. All of the women connected with the service were present, handsomely gowned as for a high social occasion. There were several visiting women of the service, gowned as guests at a reception. A large body of notably alert looking men of the Company were there, and the guests from the town at once became hosts to all who came from outside, welcoming them and congratulating them all on what had been accomplished. A very nice lunch of fruit salad, ice cream and coffee was served in the old building by the Green Lantern Tea Room, and the company lingered long, inspecting the new plant and discussing telephone progress and kindred topics.

“The men whose quick accuracy “cut out” the old and “cut in” the new, were: at the old building cutting out, Robert Moriarty, Edward O’Neil and Edward Green, all Combination Linemen, and all from Springfield; Myron Rogers, Cableman, of Springfield, and Christopher Slocombe of Northampton, who was Test Man during the cut-over process. At the “cut in” end in the new building, were William P. Ring, Wire Chief of Westfield, and H. C. Swanson of Boston. The hostesses of this unique occasion were the young women of the operating force: Miss Grace Rohan, Chief Operator; Miss Ethel

Flanagan, Miss Julia M. Daley, Miss Florence E. Kingsley, Mrs. Ethel Campbell, Miss Rose M. Connor, Miss Ruby M. Dyer, who is Night Operator; Miss Loretta McAuley, Miss Rose M. Menton, Miss Irene V. Menton, Miss Mary M. Smith and Mrs. Lena J. Allen.

“Those present from the town were Selectmen Coyle, Clapp and Brown; Town Clerk Walker; Milo H. Buzzee, Chairman of the Board of Public Works; Chief of Police Cook, John N. Lyman, G. Arthur Cook, Charles H. Johnson, Rev. George Thurlow, John Leitch and Postmaster Edward Diamond.

“The visiting telephone women were Miss Mary O’Donnell, Chief Operator of Northampton; Miss Mary Corcoran of Springfield, District Chief Operator; Miss Alice D. Forbes, Chief Operator of Amherst; Miss Julia Finn, Division Supervisor of Springfield.

“Other Springfield system guests were: A. D. Horton, Division Traffic Engineer; J. F. Shaw, Manager, formerly Manager of the Northampton Exchange; E. A. Wagner, Sales Supt., formerly Commercial Representative at Northampton; C. S. Parker, District Office Manager, formerly Acting Manager at Northampton; W. F. Langdon, Cable Foreman; M. A. Relihan, Switchboard Man; George F. Warren, Job Foreman on the new building here; R. A. Streeter, Supervising Foreman on the new plant; F. V. Moulton, Traffic Supt.; T. F. Williams, Traffic Supervisor; H. J. Hebert, Supt. of Equipment Installation, who supervised the installation here; Fred Marston, District Manager; C. W. Dufresne, Division Manager; John G. Andrews, Jr., Traffic Manager, Manual; Carl W. Proctor, Traffic Manager of the new dial system; Division Plant Supt. Rockhold of Springfield, with Mrs. Rockhold, and George Holt, Division Traffic Foreman.

“Northampton men present were, with Manager Warner, Leslie H. Streeter, Wire Chief; John Proctor, Class A Installation Man, son of Alec. Proctor, long Manager and gratefully remembered; Miss Harriet Proctor, daughter of Alec. Proctor, Repair Clerk for the Northampton Area; E. L. Green, Combination Repairman; R. A. Bardwell, Testman; and J. E. Enwright, Commercial Representative.

“Other telephone people here were: H. C. Swanson of

Boston, of the Engineering Department; W. H. Harrington of Amherst, Class A Installation Man; H. W. Emerson of Holyoke, Manager; M. M. Rogers of Amherst, Cable Repairman; William P. Ring, of Westfield, Wire Chief; A. E. Goodhind, Westfield Central Office Repairman; E. I. Morrow, Westfield, Head Lineman, and Charles Ballou of Holyoke, Line Assigner; Henry Partridge of the Easthampton system was host in general and had a busy evening. He has seen the whole system grow, and is full of pride and satisfaction with the solid things accomplished. Walter Connor of this town, Field Engineer for this division, knew all of those present, for his work places him in touch with them all, and he helped do the honors for his home town and exchange. Clinton Axtell, who is Janitor of the new building, showed the visitors how finely it is built, and how convenient to handle, and he had it warm, thoroughly warm, that's one of his much appreciated specialties in any building with which he is connected. It was a notable affair. It is a specialized and highly trained force that is conducting this great public utility."

The heavy rains which descended Nov. 2, 3, and 4, 1927, caused the Vermont flood, and also caused apprehension to the citizens of Cummington, especially to Mrs. Lacey. This was related in Telephone Topics: While John T. Lacey, Agent of the Telephone Company at Cummington, was working with other residents of the town to strengthen the dam less than 1,000 feet from the Central Office, his wife remained alone at the switchboard until the water in the street had receded.

When the water began to rise Mrs. Lacey sent her children up the mountain and determined to give all the help she could on the local switchboard. For several hours people expected that the dam might break. From time to time Wire Chief Streeter at Northampton talked with her and every time she told him that she was all right.

Maude E. Willis, former Cashier at Amherst, was appointed District Training Supervisor and D. Alma Denny was engaged as Cashier at Amherst, according to Topics of February, 1928.

Bernard A. Dwyer received a welcome to the Northampton Business Office as Commercial Representative in September,

1928, while John Enwright was bade a fond farewell, as he departed to the Pittsfield District.

Mary A. O'Donnell, Chief Operator at Northampton, was transferred to the Division Office, Springfield, as Division Instructor.

Mary C. Corcoran was appointed Chief Operator of the Northampton Exchange in September, 1929.

March, 1930, Topics—New Office at Cummington

At 1 P.M. on January 11, Supervisor of Installation Homer J. Hebert gave word to "cut" and the new 105 B switchboard at Cummington became an active member of the rapidly increasing magneto "Better Service Society." Incidentally, another Village type board passed into oblivion.

Two strenuous weeks were experienced by F. G. Atchinson, H. W. Marks, and J. R. Howell, who worked to bring about this cut-over at the appointed time. After traveling to Chesterfield in a driving sleet storm, Fred and Harry worked all night installing a phantom toll circuit to be ready when Cummington was cut over.

After the smoke had cleared away, Manager E. P. Warner invited all to a dinner at the local hostelry, at which were several of the influential men of the town, who had participated in the event.

March, 1930, Topics—George A. Shea, who had been connected with the Worcester Commercial Office for several years, was appointed Manager at Northampton and assumed his new duties in January, 1930.

George joined the ranks of telephone workers in 1925 in the Cable Dept., and some time later transferred to the Commercial. Here he found a chance to exercise his abilities in the line of selling and meeting the public, and being blessed with a pleasant personality he made good at once.

For some time he ran a class in salesmanship for Plant people, and at the time of his transfer, was in full charge of directory advertising.

The Wire Chief's office at Northampton on Center Street was moved to the third floor of the Woolworth Building on Main Street, May 27, 1930, more room being required for the Central Office equipment. By a strange coincidence, this loca-





ALEXANDER PROCTOR



HARRY L. JONES



THOMAS F. MAGUIRE



LILLIAN C. FAIRBROTHER



HAROLD F. WEST



ANNA E. WILBER



tion was where the first telephone office was established way back in October, 1880. At that time, the building was called the Parsons Block.

July, 1930, Topics—Dial Office at Williamsburg.

Williamsburg, in Western Mass., will soon be operated on a dial basis; Supervising Foreman C. E. Davis and his crew are installing a Type 350-A office of 220 lines, which are mostly farmer lines. The system is strictly a community dial and will serve only the towns of Williamsburg and Goshen. The new Williamsburg unit has Northampton as its Master Office.

The Williamsburg cut over occurred February 28, 1931.

## CHAPTER 22

### *Interviews With Telephone Agents*

Chesterfield	Albert W. Nichols
Cummington	John T. Lacey
East Longmeadow	Miss Susan F. Delehanty
Hatfield	Mrs. Nellie R. Donlin
Worthington	Mrs. Horace S. Cole

#### CHESTERFIELD

ALBERT W. NICHOLS was the first and only Agent of the Chesterfield Exchange, and he furnished the following information, as he sat at his large roll-top desk in his snug Northampton apartment Jan. 3, 1948.

The first telephone exchange was opened in Chesterfield Feb. 6, 1906, in Mr. Nichol's house, just south of the center. Prior to this, service was furnished to two or three subscribers by means of a grounded line which had been built from Northampton through Chesterfield to Worthington. The service was not a success—sometimes they could use it and sometimes they couldn't.

The New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. sent William R. McComsey, a solicitor from Boston, to see if enough signatures could be obtained to establish an exchange. Perceiving that Mr. Nichols had a fine rig, he engaged him to drive him about the town. His mission proving successful, he also engaged Mr. Nichols to become Agent of the new exchange and wrote the first contract.

The new Agent was born in Washington, D. C. July 29,

1875, one year prior to the birth of the telephone. He became a resident of Chesterfield when one year of age. After his schooling, he went to Northampton to learn the jewelry business, first with A. S. Cooley and later with G. Henry Clark. He returned to Chesterfield to do watch repairing and then attended the Waltham Horological School to learn the finer art of watch making. He was again practicing his business in Chesterfield when he signed the contract to be Agent of the new telephone exchange.

At first the circuits came in through the house from a tall pole just outside and were grounded in the cellar. The most serious emergency during his Agency was when a sleet storm so crippled this terminal pole that all the lines were "out" for three days.

At first he installed new batteries in houses and fixed crossed wires but did no installing. A severe sickness deprived him of the use of one side, so his telephone and watch repairing activities became more restricted. His wife and daughter carried on at the switchboard, and are now living with him in Northampton.

On April 9, 1941, Mr. Nichols was retired, after a telephone career of 35 years of service. On that date, the conversion of the magneto board to dial service occurred.

On the occasion of his 31st anniversary as Agent, Mr. Nichols was asked to write an article about his experiences for the "Telephone Topics." Fortunately the typewritten original was pasted in a small scrap book reposing in his large roll-top desk. It so typifies the spirit of these pioneer Agents that it is quoted in full:

"February 6, 1906, was my first association with the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company as the Agent in my town, where this month I completed my 31st year with the Company. At that time Alexander Proctor, since deceased, was our Manager at Northampton, a fine man, indeed. I well remember the day when he came with a pair of horses and two men to install the switchboard. A small village board, it was installed and completed in one day. We had but a few subscribers and no instructions. Mr. Proctor, before leaving, came to the switchboard and said, 'I have no instructions as to operating

to give you, but it will pay you well to remember one thing, courtesy costs nothing, but it makes lots of friends.'

"How true it was, how well I remember his saying it and I have tried to profit by it through the long term of years.

"Times have changed. We commenced with seven subscribers, thirty-five were soon added to our list and now we have nearly 100 and a large switchboard was furnished to meet our needs.

"Recently, we desired the "telephone room" for other purposes and asked the Telephone Company to have the switchboard moved to another room. It was moved, mass of wires, framework, cabinet, etc., at an expense of several hundred dollars, without a murmur or second request.

"My experience with several officials of the Company with whom it has been my lot to come in contact, has been of the best.

"I could not ask for better or more considerate employers than the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company.

"Signed, Albert W. Nichols, Agent"

#### CUMMINGTON

A call on Mr. and Mrs. John T. Lacey, Oct. 13, 1955, at their Williamsburg home, was an enjoyable occasion, and they also appeared to enjoy talking over the days when they were in charge of the Cummington office.

It appears that there were two Agents prior to Mr. Lacey's appointment. Robert A. Daley was the first Agent of this exchange, which was started about Sept. 15, 1905. The Company had bought the F. V. Bates house and installed a magneto switchboard. "Bob" Daley, who came from Springfield, was spoken of by Mr. Lacey as a real likeable and accomodating man. His wife and daughter were, of course, a great help to him. Unfortunately his health soon failed and on Oct. 13, 1907, he passed away, mourned by his many friends.

Daniel Bannister succeeded Mr. Daley as Agent. "Dan" had worked in Northampton for Alexander Proctor as a Collector and in the Maintenance Dept. as an Installer and Repairman. In 1918 he gave up the Agency and went to work for another concern.

John Lacey started in the telephone business in 1910 at Northampton under Alphonse Goulet, working on installations and repairs. The telephone office was then in the Columbian building. John was engaged by Henry Chapman and Gus McAulay, District Traffic and Plant Chiefs, as the new Agent. The Agency was then in a house at the junction of the Pittsfield and Plainfield roads, where a filling station has been built in front of the house.

The Laceys moved to Cummington on Nov. 11, 1918, Armistice Day. Virginia Sears had been looking after the office for a short time, and she remained a little while longer. The new Agent then secured the services of Ruby Dyer, who operated and lived there eight years. Mrs. Daley, the first Agent's wife, helped out when needed. Ruby was followed by Millicent Parsons, who remained fifteen years. Mrs. Lacey, of course, started right in working on the board, and later their son and daughter lent their services.

"Jack" soon found out that his new position wasn't to be a 'bed of roses,' especially in the winter. He attended to the installing and repairing for his own exchange and also for the Chesterfield and Worthington exchanges. A horse and wagon was furnished him, but he soon bought a Ford car. Many of his telephone lines followed 'rights of way' through brush and woodland where "Henry" could not travel. In winter, "Jack," with a pack of tools on his back, trudged through the snow and brush fixing the damaged lines. At the time of one sleet storm, he counted 15 breaks on one line in a mile's distance.

The persevering Agent was also troubled by woodsmen felling trees, which occasionally brought down or broke some wires. A French Canadian was causing two or three such mishaps a week. Finally John gave him a good talking to, telling him that in such cases subscribers could not get the doctor or summon help in case of fire. After that, the culprit was more careful.

Speaking of doctors, John, who also attended the switchboard nights, related how a subscriber frantically called and asked him to send a doctor. The local physician drove hurriedly to the man's place only to find out the farmer wanted a

'horse' doctor. John said the farmer always blamed him for the loss of his horse.

The most exciting experience of the Laceys was during the November, 1927, flood, which has been related in Chapter 21.

One spring day, Ray Snow came up to give John the benefit of some new practices. John took him for a ride over some muddy, deep rutted roads, and when they got back, Ray told John he didn't see how he got such good results under such adverse conditions.

The office was cut over to Dial Nov. 13, 1940, and the Laceys moved to Springfield, where John worked on trouble and in the stock room eight more years. Prior to their departure, however, a large number of people, from all around, assembled in the Community House and presented them with gifts and money in appreciation of their faithful service.

#### EAST LONGMEADOW

The following story was written after pleasant interviews with Mrs. George B. Robinson and Miss Susan F. Delehanty on Jan. 17, 1948.

East Longmeadow was served from the Springfield exchange until about 1904, when an exchange was established with George B. Robinson as Agent.

Mr. Robinson was born in 1866, in the Baptist District of East Longmeadow, and had as a neighbor "Susie" Delehanty. He received his schooling in East Longmeadow and at Charles Business College in Springfield and then entered the quarry business on Kibbe Road, East Longmeadow. Quarrying was then the chief industry there, and Mr. Robinson's sister had married one of the Norcross family, which operated the principal quarries of the town.

Buildings at Mount Holyoke and Yale Colleges were made of this brown stone, as was the East Longmeadow Town Hall. Mr. Robinson became a Selectman and Representative at Boston for a few years.

The first telephone exchange was established in a building on the east side of Prospect Street, just three or four hundred feet south of the square. It was known as the Robinson Block, and was a two and a half story house with three tenements and



a store. It was purchased by Mr. Robinson from "Cris" Sessions, whose son had conducted a meat market there. It was in the erstwhile office of this market, that the first switchboard was set up. Mr. Robinson used the store space for a confectionery and tobacco shop and for some years the telephone operators took care of the store along with the telephone business, which probably wasn't too exacting in those days, as the lines were heavily loaded and a subscriber could ring anyone on his line.

A small village board was installed under the supervision of "Gus" McAulay and "Bill" French, the former, an outside Plant man, and the latter, the Springfield Assistant Manager. Miss Susan Delehanty, who had been working in the W. J. Medlicott Company's Knitting Factory on Morris Street, Springfield, was engaged by Mr. Robinson to be the first Operator. An iron bed was set up in an adjoining room, and the first night she was there the bed collapsed, and she was initiated into her new duties by sleeping on the floor. Her experience in the telephone business had been a telephone call to Hartford, from one of the public telephones, and being inexperienced she asked a man to put in the call for her. She had never made a call until she began to work for the Telephone Company. The instructions given her were a hurried "just plug in" and the first call that came in was from Ethan Hancock of Porter Road, and by "just plugging in" she somehow succeeded in completing the call. Later she got more instructions from Jack Lyons, and Miss Frost brought out a head set for her. There were two lines to Springfield at the beginning. She was on duty, as was the custom in those days, twenty four hours a day and seven days a week, receiving \$6.00 per week.

Besides "Gus" McAulay, Frank McInnis was engaged in outside Plant work, and Henry Chapman was in the Traffic Dept. Miss Delehanty saw quite a little of these men.

Dr. Conro, a physician, was probably the first in this section to conceive the idea of playing chess by telephone. Their game, no doubt, was often interrupted by party line interference.

Miss Delehanty worked two years, lacking a month, and then resumed her work at the Knitting Factory. Fred Bradshaw, a telephone man, took over the operating end.

Olive Worthington from Somers and Fannie Dobson of East Longmeadow were the succeeding operators. "Patsy" Leary had charge of the operating for quite a long while.

On August 1st, 1911, Miss Delehanty was made Agent by Mr. Chapman. The switchboard had been kept in the same place, but when she took over, they rewired the little board and moved it out into the main room. The candy and tobacco business had been given up just before this. Later they put in a one position board with 5 or 6 trunks to Springfield.

Miss Delehanty's sales ability, for which she later received many prizes, developed itself right away; for she hadn't been Agent a month when she sold 25 telephones and soon brought the Exchange up to 100 subscribers.

In 1912, she bought a house, with an adjoining lot, on Brooks Street; and in December, 1915, the Exchange was moved to the second floor of her home, where she celebrated by having her first Christmas dinner. The Exchange was disconnected not quite two hours during the transfer, as they had to rewire the frame. Burgis and Frank Gillis worked on the transfer to Brooks Street. Jack Lyons was 'on trouble' at that time.

Later Miss Delehanty built a house on the vacant lot and moved there. The Telephone Company put in a two position board, which it couldn't do in the other house as it was too heavy for the second floor.

Besides her sales ability she developed a mechanical prowess. She learned to put in fuses and to install batteries at subscribers' premises. They used to mail batteries to subscribers, and as some didn't know how to connect them, Miss Delehanty would obligingly do the work for them.

No alarming troubles occurred during her Agency, except the hurricane of 1938. She was so busy at the board then that she didn't even see a tree topple over. When the electric wires came down on the telephone lines, the current penetrated the board making a crackling noise, and gave a bad shock to the ear if one happened to be on the lines. To prevent the electric current setting fire to the board, she had to rush to the other side of the board when receiving these alarming signals and push a knitting needle, having a wooden handle, under the heat coil and throw it out.

Miss Delehanty, with her Irish wit, said the reason she never married was she didn't come of a marrying family—only two out of the nine children in her family having married.

The new community dial service was inaugurated April 23, 1941, and the retired Agent now resides in a cozy apartment in East Longmeadow where she can look out over the Square and see her former houses on Brooks Street. She is a regular attendant at Pioneer gatherings and is affectionately known to her many friends as "Susie."

Mr. Robinson died in 1938 and is survived by his widow, who before her marriage was Annie Cameron of South Hadley Center. She, too, lives near the center of East Longmeadow and chats over the telephone with her old friend, "Susie."

#### HATFIELD

It was nice to be welcomed into Mrs. Nellie R. Donlin's spacious home in Hatfield on Jan. 10, 1948, on a cold, windy winter's day. As she wistfully recalled her days as Agent, the aroma of a chicken, which she was cooking for her husband's supper, wafted into the parlor. At the age of 78, she is not dependent on any help.

Mrs. Donlin recounted that a Mrs. Emma Webber, now deceased, was the New England Telephone Co.'s first Agent. The Exchange was opened March 7, 1906, prior to which time the town was served by rural lines from Northampton. A village type magneto board was installed in Mrs. Webber's residence.

Upon Mrs. Webber's resignation, due to illness, Mr. Chapman, District Traffic Manager, asked Mrs. Donlin to take the Agency. After consulting with her brother, John C. Ryan, who had bought the brick house at 43 Main Street for her occupancy, she agreed to take it provided the remuneration permitted her to employ two operators. Her first operator was Anna Hickey, aged 16, who had previously worked for Mrs. Webber. Mrs. Donlin succeeded in having the Smith Charities, in Northampton, "bind her out"—which meant that if the girl proved industrious and of good character, she would receive \$300 upon reaching the age of 21. Edna Wholley, now an Operator at South Deerfield, also worked here.

Mrs. Donlin, a native of Hatfield, was born Nov. 11, 1870.

Her father operated a farm and was able to make money on tobacco at ten cents a pound—now 70 to 80 cents. Her husband, James F. Donlin, she met when working in a warehouse of her brother's.

The village board was transferred to a room in the back of her home in 1921 and the batteries installed in the cellar. Mr. Proctor was Manager at Northampton when the Hatfield Exchange was started, and "Bill" Shea was Wire Chief when Mrs. Donlin took the Agency.

There was only one outside circuit to Northampton when she became Agent. She and John Lacey, Agent of the Cummington Exchange, complained at a Telephone Agents' meeting about the trouble they had getting South Deerfield, and soon afterwards a circuit to that nearby exchange was added to her board. Later, a new magneto board was installed, which remained until the office was converted to dial.

The most exciting time experienced during her Agency was the flood of 1936. The Connecticut River gradually rose so that the water surrounded her house and reached the second cellar stair from the top. The Chief of Police, Arthur Breer, called and wanted her and her operators to leave. She refused to leave, and the State Police then called to try their persuasive powers. She replied she wouldn't leave till she was told to do so by Mr. Hall in Springfield. At that time the fear was prevalent that the dam at Turners Falls would break and wash out Hatfield, and people were frantically calling the office to get the latest news. Mrs. Donlin had asked the Turners Falls operator to let her know if the dam broke. Wild rumors were springing up, and she and her operators were able to contradict them and keep a semblance of calm in the community. Finally Mr. Hall gave the orders to leave; and, much to her chagrin, she and her operators were transported to the Town Hall by truck, but not until she had collected all her payment records and other papers, which she thought important.

"Al" Morton and "Red" Vail were dispatched to Hatfield by Richard Whitcomb, Division Manager, and after a thrilling trip from Springfield, they reached Northampton the next day. "Charlie" Haynes, then Northampton Telephone Manager, drove them to the river's bank at the 'cliff,' where the

Coast Guard took them and their supplies aboard, and rowed them to the veranda of the marooned Donlin home. Mrs. Donlin could not be prevailed upon to remain in the Town Hall that night, so the truck was again called into action to return the Donlins to "home sweet home." She remained at home after that and looked after the boys, giving them a few pointers about operating the magneto switchboard and providing them with some very palatable meals.

The waters subsided in about three days and the townspeople breathed easier. A couple of telephone lines had been patched through to the Town Hall, when she was ordered to leave, so that the office continued to render emergency service during that short interval.

Mrs. Donlin remained Agent until the cutover of the dial system on Dec. 27, 1939.

#### WORTHINGTON

It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon, Jan. 22, 1948, and about a foot of snow covered the landscape, which is not unusual on the heights of Worthington.

Mrs. Horace Cole sat by a front window in the room where she had looked after the first switchboard for so many years, and near by sat her daughter, Elizabeth Torrey, holding her baby boy. The story, as related by Mrs. Cole, with a little help from her daughter, seemed to convey some meaning to the baby who remained quiet and attentive throughout.

Telephone service was first furnished to this town by a rural line which was run from Northampton to Chesterfield and Worthington. A telephone was located in the Worthington Inn, owned by A. W. Trow, one at South Worthington in Witherell's Store, and at the Center in Cole's Store. The Inn catered to summer guests, and a few summer families resided in town, mostly from Springfield. Russell Conwell, of 'Acres of Diamonds' fame, was born here and maintained a summer home in the town. Most of the townspeople, however, were engaged in farming, except some who worked in three basket factories. This was quite an industry which thrived on the plentiful supply of ash trees. There were four post offices and

three general stores and now only one of each. The Inn later burned, was rebuilt, and again destroyed by fire.

In the Fall of 1905, William R. McComsey spent two or three weeks here and secured about fifty applicants for service to a local exchange. Horace S. Cole became the first Agent. He was a native of the town, and his father and grandfather ran the store before him. He was Town Clerk for many years and had been a Selectman. Mrs. Cole was born in Worcester, her maiden name being Anna Abbott Perry.

A village type wall board was installed in a little room in the back of the store; and another board was put in the Cole house about a tenth of a mile from the store, on the old Chesterfield Road, which highway used to be the Old Boston Turnpike between Boston and Albany. They attended the board in the store daytimes and switched it over to the house nights and sometimes during the day, when an unusual rush of business occurred. Mrs. Cole said "Tom" Maguire did the installation work. They engaged a boy, Donald Stevens, who operated the board three summers. Minnie Knapp also worked as an operator for many years.

Mrs. Cole used to attend the board at night with the aid of a loud buzzer. Later, her daughters Olive and Elizabeth helped her. Elizabeth Torrey, with her husband and children, now resides with her mother in the old homestead and carries on the telephone tradition as Payment Agent. Mrs. Cole's daughter Olive, Pittsfield District Chief Clerk, recently celebrated her 31st year with the Telephone Company.

With a family of three boys and two girls to take a turn at the switchboard, the telephone business went on smoothly. Mr. Cole installed batteries and straightened out crossed wires, the latter trouble being attended to by means of a long fish pole with a hook on the end.

At the beginning, there were fourteen or fifteen subscribers on a line. The parties on a line rang one another and obtained the news of the day from their own and others' calls, so it was no wonder they did not take kindly to having their lines reduced to seven or eight parties.

The ice storm in late November, 1921, that did so much damage in Chesterfield, brought most of the lines in Worthing-

ton to the ground; and the exchange was out of operation for several days. During this time they ran an emergency line over the ground to Chesterfield, so that a doctor might be summoned for an expectant mother. This was the first time in all the years the Coles had the Agency that they all went out together.

Subscribers paid bills at the store, but it was necessary, now and then, to hitch up the horse and go out collecting. Mrs. Cole said she enjoyed these outings, as they took their dinner and made a picnic of it.

To get to Worthington from Northampton, before the days of the automobile, one generally went by trolley to Williamsburg or Hinsdale and there hired a horse and buggy at the livery stable. Agents were expected to go out with messages to neighbors and to aid in emergencies, such as procuring and delivering medicine.

Telephone men that came up here now and then were Richard Dee, Henry Chapman, Augustus McAulay, and later Ralph Jones.

The Exchange was started with one toll line to Northampton and later was connected to Cummington, Chesterfield, Huntington, Dalton and Pittsfield. The first little board had been placed on a side wall of the front room of the house and then moved into a back room. Later, the two small wall boards were replaced by a large one-position magneto board, placed in the back room of the residence. Then, a two position board was installed, which remained until the Exchange was converted to dial operation, Dec. 17, 1941.

The new dial office was built on land purchased from Mr. Cole and stands about 300 feet beyond the old house, which for so many years was the home of the Worthington Exchange.

## CHAPTER 23

### *Palmer Exchange Area*

THE New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. was organized Oct. 19, 1883, and the Palmer exchange was assigned to the Western Division, the Superintendent of which was Frank G. Daboll, of Springfield.

A tribute to the Telephone Manager is taken from the *Palmer Journal* of Dec. 28, 1883: "The telephone subscribers of the Palmer exchange, remembering Mrs. Emma Weeman's patient and forgiving disposition when accosted by a no more dignified salutation than "Hello!" made her a Christmas present of \$71.50. Mrs. Weeman has had charge of the central office since its establishment, nearly three years ago, and has given universal satisfaction to the patrons of this exchange."

Another reference to lightning appeared in the *Journal*: "The telephones at the State Primary School (the site of the Monson State Hospital), Weeks House, and Edgerton and Davis's were burned out by lightning during Wednesday's storm."

A summary of the subscribers was given in the Oct. 31, 1884, *Journal*: The New England Telephone Co. has issued a new list of exchanges and subscribers, and by it the Palmer Exchange is credited with having 81 subscribers, divided among the different villages as follows: Palmer 39, Monson 21, Brimfield 5, Three Rivers 4, Thorndike 4, Wales 3, Bondsville 3, Ware 2.

The Palmer Wire Co. was mentioned Nov. 7, 1884, for another progressive step: The Palmer Wire Co. has lately drawn and shipped over 40 tons of hard-drawn copper wire for tele-



phone purposes, and is constantly receiving orders for more. The Mills are running night forces in order to keep up with their orders.

Mr. Thomas B. Doolittle had succeeded in building a telephone line of hard-drawn copper wire between Boston and New York which met with the approval of the Directors of the American Telephone Co. A demand for this improved means of transmission ensued, and the Palmer Wire Co. was quick to procure orders.

Gilbertville first received telephone service over a line from Ware in 1892. In 1895 an exchange was established with 15 customers in a business block on Main street, according to Topics.

When Eldora Johnson first went to work as an operator in Ware, in 1897, the services of but one girl at a time were required, and there were less than 100 subscribers.

Miss Carrie E. Hoppe, who was living in Palmer, started her career in the Traffic Dept. as an Operator in 1900. The Manager at that time was Hattie Plumley, who came from Greenfield, Miss Hoppe said.

Topics reported that Daniel J. Connor was the first telephone man stationed at Palmer, in 1902. He began work with the Telephone Company at Greenfield on Nov. 11, 1896.

Hampden was furnished with a small village type switchboard about 1905, with Matthais Casey serving as Agent. Hampden had no outside telephone connection until it got this office. Mr. Casey's house was on Main street, diagonally across from the Catholic Church towards the 'Center.' He was called the "Mayor of Hampden."

Ralph Eldridge was appointed Manager of the Palmer exchange in September, 1905, and remained until October, 1907, when he was transferred to Brattleboro. Previously Ralph had been Chief Operator at Greenfield. He first went to work for the Company at Shelburne Falls, where he learned to operate a switchboard in the early days.

Telephone Topics made its first appearance in May, 1907, and Monson received honorable mention in this issue: The Monson exchange has the best farmers' line development of any exchange in the Western Division. Every single highway

leading from the center of the town has a telephone line running out several miles. Miss Nellie R. Parker, who has operated this exchange for several years at her residence, has been quite ill and will probably have to give up the business.

The August Topics continued with the subject: The Monson exchange has been moved from the old quarters in Miss Parker's residence to larger rooms farther uptown, in Hymen and Litchtens building near the bank. As soon as the new three-position board arrives and has been installed, Monson will have as nice a telephone exchange as many places of several times its number of inhabitants.

Charles W. Chamberlain, Chief Inspector at Holyoke, was appointed Manager at Palmer in September, 1907, taking the place of Ralph J. Eldridge.

In October, 1908, Miss Alice Warriner was appointed Chief Operator of the Warren exchange. About a year later a new farmers' line was run to South Warren, and ten subscribers secured, part of which had been waiting about four years for service.

George H. Garfield was mentioned in the November Topics as the Manager at Ware.

On the evening of July 17, 1909, the operating force at Ware bade good-by to their old office and gladly marched to their new quarters, located at 97 Main Street. The new magneto board which is made up of two three position sections, has four positions equipped, two for toll and two for local work. A rest room has been provided, which is highly appreciated by the operators.

The Palmer Exchange had its first PBX working very successfully in February, 1909, as the division force from Springfield, with the local force, installed a PBX No. 1, with eighteen stations, at the Wright Wire Mills.

Mrs. Esther E. Sullivan was appointed Agent at Gilbertville in 1909, and continued in that capacity until Myron E. Richardson, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, dialed the first call on Sept. 25, 1940.

Gilbertville's plight on Christmas day, 1909, was related in Telephone Topics: The building, in which our central office

was located, was totally destroyed by fire at 8 A.M., as well as all our central office equipment.

At 1:40 P.M., an emergency 80-line switchboard was loaded on a Boston & Maine train arriving at Gilbertville at 4:07 P.M. Work of fitting up our new central office quarters was begun at 4 P.M., in the parlor of a boarding house and at 2:30 A.M., December 26th, we were ready to operate the board, when it was found that the switchboard induction coil was defective. A new one could be taken from one of the spare positions in the Ware switchboard, but there were no cars running that late and a team could not be secured at that time of night. Next morning there was a severe snow storm and it took about four hours for a car to get through to Ware and back again, that usually takes one hour. The coil, a No. 10 induction, was installed and service given at 10:30 A.M. Sunday, December 26th, the subscribers being without service for a total of 26½ hours, except that during the time all the pay stations in Gilbertville were cut into Ware toll lines. Much praise was given to F. R. Clark, General Foreman of Equipment as well as the Supervisor of Supplies who shipped the board so promptly from Boston, also to all our own men who worked all night in the storm and cold in order to restore service.

In March, 1910, Miss Ernestine M. Dutilly, Chief Operator of the Palmer Exchange, was appointed to the same position in the Northampton Exchange. Miss Dutilly, a native of Palmer, was engaged as an Operator Dec. 23, 1905, and was promoted to Chief Operator in January, 1908.

Miss Nellie G. Monahan was selected to take Miss Dutilly's place as Chief Operator.

The training of an operator, Miss Dutilly said, consisted of equipping her with a head-set and letting her listen in and watch an operator at work. At the end of two weeks, they changed places for a week, whereupon she received a diploma.

Edward B. Blanchard, a pay station agent, accepted the position of Class "F" Agent at the Barre, Mass., Exchange.

On Nov. 12, 1910, the Palmer office was moved from the Lynde Block, where it had been for nine years, to the new Post Office building on Main Street. The Telephone Topics stated that the new quarters are a great improvement, as the Com-

mercial, Plant and Traffic Departments all have separate offices, while in the old office these departments were all in one room.

On Jan. 20, 1911, the Palmer office of the Western Union Telegraph Co. was moved from the Boston and Albany depot to the office of the New England Telephone Co. on Main Street.

After the burning of the Gilbertville exchange building, a switchboard was hurriedly installed in a boarding house. Manager Chamberlain now found more suitable quarters and on July 1, 1911, the telephone office was moved to the building completed by the George H. Gilbert Manufacturing Co., at the Square. Mrs. Esther E. Sullivan had been Agent since 1909.

Miss Anna E. O'Connor was appointed Clerk in the Manager's office at Palmer, November, 1911, succeeding Miss Florence M. Healey, resigned.

These telephone stories appeared in Topics:

A Beverly operator asked a subscriber: "Is this M," and received the reply; "No, this is Susie, 'Em' is upstairs."

Operator: "Number, please?"

Subscriber: "I vas talking mit my husband und now I don't hear him any more. You must of pushed him off de vire."

The Monson Central Office was moved to new quarters on the second floor of the Norcross block in June, 1912.

In 1913 Miss Mary A. Murphy resigned her position as Chief Operator of the Monson Exchange. Miss Murphy worked as an Operator for a year, when Miss Nellie Parker, with the help of her sisters, Sadie and Lizzie, conducted the Agency. In 1907 it became a Company operated office and Elizabeth Parker took the position of Chief Operator for a short while. Then Miss Murphy was appointed to the post. The reason for Miss Murphy's resignation was her approaching marriage to William F. Langan, of the Northampton Cable Department.

Miss Sadie Lyons was appointed Chief Operator of the Monson Exchange, having been an operator there for some time.

Palmer was the recipient of a new type of switchboard, according to Topics: On May 12, 1917, the service of nearly

700 telephone subscribers in Palmer was instantly transferred from the present magneto switchboard to a new Common Battery board, the latest type. One of the most welcome innovations is the introduction of divided ringing on two and six party lines. The new switchboard will have positions for eight operators to work at one time, four of whom will handle local calls and four toll calls to other exchanges.

Ten years ago there were 210 subscribers in Palmer, five years ago there were 435 and now there are almost 700. From the Palmer central office there radiate 29 trunk lines as follows: Brimfield, three lines; Monson, six lines; North Wilbraham, two lines; Springfield, seven lines; Stafford Springs, one line; Ware, three lines; Warren, three lines; Worcester, four lines.

Grace MacDonnell reported for work at the Palmer business office Feb. 11, 1918, and she became well known as a Service Representative.

Laura E. Whitney entered the Palmer business office Nov. 8, 1920, where she was instructed in the Commercial Practices by Manager Chamberlain and Miss MacDonnell. A vacancy occurred in the Westfield Office and Laura accepted the position as of June 17, 1922.

The names of three Warren telephone ladies were learned from a vacation item: Miss Mary Burke, Miss Mildred Littlefield and Mrs. M. E. Curran, night operator.

W. S. Knox was appointed Acting Manager at Palmer after the death of Manager Chamberlain.

George H. Cheney became Manager at Palmer in November, 1922, succeeding W. S. Knox, who was transferred to North Adams as Manager. Mr. Cheney had served in various positions in the Commercial Dept. He was also a newspaper reporter in Pittsfield before entering the Company. Until his promotion, he was Assistant to Manager Stedman at North Adams.

Madeline Lavender entered the telephone business as an Operator at the Warren Office on April 30, 1923, and was advanced to Junior Supervisor in a little less than a year. She later became Chief Operator.

Eugene P. Lowell was appointed Wire Chief of the Palmer

Exchange Area in April, 1924. "Gene's" work with the Company started in 1903, when he was employed in Waterville, Skowhegan and Lewiston, Me., until 1906. He was then made Wire Chief at Waterville, and in 1908 he accepted a position as Chief Electrician at the Harvard Medical College at Cambridge. He returned to the Company in Boston in 1910 and soon was transferred to Springfield as a Test Man, advancing to Central Office Foreman prior to his Palmer transfer.

On Dec. 3, 1924, Ralph H. Hoit was appointed Manager at Palmer, succeeding George F. Cheney, transferred to Westfield. Ralph is a native of New Hampshire—Goffstown. His first work in the telephone family was in December, 1917, as General Inspector in N.H. for the Plant Dept. After filling several minor positions, in the early fall of 1919 he was appointed Chief Clerk for the Division Supt. of Plant at Manchester, and in August, 1920, he became Right of Way Man for the N.H. Division.

On June 1, 1925, Dora A. Dowd was advanced from Assistant Toll Chief Operator in Springfield to Chief Operator at Palmer. Miss Dowd entered the service at Springfield July 21, 1907, and her previous experience as Operator, Toll Supervisor, Toll Observer, and Assistant Chief Operator makes her well fitted for her new position.

Matthias Casey, who was the first Agent of the Hampden Exchange about 1905, resigned his position and was succeeded by Mrs. Hazel M. Burleigh on Dec. 31, 1924. The fine spirit of the telephone agents was demonstrated in his letter of resignation, in which he thanked the Company for its courtesies and co-operation in the past and very kindly stated that he is willing at any time to do what he can to further the Company's interests in the town.

Sam: "Say, Mose, what am you-all doin' now?"

Mose: "I'se an exporter."

Sam: "An exporter?"

Mose: "Yep. The Pullman Company dey done fire me."

*Railway Life.*

The Topics of Jan., 1926, reported the following: H. J. Lucier is the new Manager at Palmer where he succeeds Ralph

H. Hoit, who has been transferred to Greenfield. "Jack" is a Western Division man, Northampton being his home town. He entered the telephone service in August, 1924, as a Commercial Representative at Springfield. While serving in that capacity he made numerous friends for himself and our Company.

Keith F. Fletcher, Office Manager at Springfield, was the next Manager at Palmer,—in May, 1927. He had successfully served as Commercial Representative in North Adams, Great Barrington and Greenfield prior to accepting the Springfield assignment.

It was indeed gratifying to read of the recognition accorded a Night Operator, which was reported in Topics of February, 1928:

"In recognition of the co-operation shown by David B. Smith, Night Operator of the Palmer office, the board of engineers of the Palmer Fire Dept. presented him a handsome silver loving cup on December 16. The presentation was made by M. Scott French, Chief of the Dept. The following letter which was also presented to Mr. Smith, is self-explanatory: "The Palmer Fire Dept. has long ago recognized the wonderful help you have rendered the members and, for that matter, the fire district, in the manner in which you call the men of the department who are served by telephone. Your thoughtfulness and your desire to co-operate with us in giving phone alarms to so many men has been a great help in saving property, especially in the case of numerous chimney fires which come over the phone.

"It is a pleasure for us to recognize, in a small way, our appreciation of your service to your employers and the town of Palmer. We herewith tender you a silver loving cup, suitably inscribed, with best wishes for a Very Happy Christmas."

Mr. Smith had served as Night Operator in the Palmer Office for thirteen and one-half years.

E. Warner Eldridge was appointed Manager of the Palmer Exchange Sept. 23, 1929. Warner started in the business May 5, 1905, as a relief operator for the Needham, Newton and Wellesley exchanges, at the age of sixteen. Soon he became

Night Operator of the Needham office. In 1910 he came to Springfield as a Service Observer, reporting to Fred White. He was transferred to the plant Dept. as a Clerk for John Armstrong, Wire Chief, in 1913.

On Oct. 14, 1918, Warner entered the Commercial Dept., working as a Coin Box Collector for Manager Sanborn, and Jan. 10, 1921, he arrived at the position of Commercial Representative. When the Springfield Commercial Office was placed on a two-unit basis about May, 1924, Warner was appointed Manager of the Walnut office. The River and Walnut Unit plan was given up in a few years and Warner resumed his previous position until his Palmer appointment. His wide telephone experience and likeable personality well fit him for his new post.

The Eldridges have held the North Wilbraham Telephone Agency since 1916, Mrs. Eldridge having looked after the operating duties. The office grew from about 120 subscribers when they took it to about 500 when they relinquished its management in 1930, a year after moving to Palmer. They were succeeded by David Dunham, who entered the telephone business at North Adams in October, 1907, and became Manager at Great Barrington Dec. 28, 1918.

A move of the business office is recorded in Topics of Jan., 1931: The new Palmer business office is conveniently situated on the ground floor of the building adjacent to the Central office.

This new office is equipped with new efficiency type desks done in light oak. The equipment has been arranged both for the comfort and convenience of the customers, and the better administration of the work of the office.

Manager E. W. Eldridge, Cashier Grace MacDonnell and Service Representative Sophie Janick are enthusiastic about their new office. The office was situated in the second floor of of the Caryl Block for twenty years; but the new appointments more than make up for pleasant memories of the old.



## CHAPTER 24

### *Westfield Exchange Area*

MOST of the subscribers were unaware that the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. came into possession of the Bay State Telephone Co. on Oct. 19, 1883. Manager Messenger continued to greet his customers in the same cordial way, and, to all intents and purposes, it was the same organization.

A tart item graced the columns of the *Westfield Times and News Letter* of Oct. 1, 1884: "F. G. Messenger, Manager of the telephone service in this town, is to be transferred to Northampton about the middle of this month. Mr. M. understands his business and the service has been quite satisfactory under his management. Probably, Westfield will be saddled with some 'green horn' in his place."

This item may have produced the desired effect for the next week's edition carried this final salvo: "The telephone management have evidently thought better of it and reconsidered their action in transferring Mr. Messenger to Northampton. They ought to have learned by this time that it is best to let well enough alone."

On the other hand, complimentary articles appeared now and then like this one: "We are pleased to note the prosperity and increasing popularity of the *Springfield Daily Union*, as evidenced by its recent enlargement and improvement in every way. May Editor Shipley live long and be happy, and may the shadow of the *Union* never grow less, and we don't think it ever will under his management."

A slightly discouraging note appeared in the *Times and News Letter* of Sept. 16, 1885: "Those who have been hoping

the telephone rates would some time be reduced so that it might pay to subscribe for one of them have hoped in vain, as notices of the advance lately made all along the line have been sent out among the local subscribers. A good many of the local takers will undoubtedly consider it a luxury and order it out. But we shall see."

There came a time, however, when Westfield had to lose its "popular Manager," Frank G. Messenger. He succeeded W. H. Coleman as Manager of the Northampton Exchange in 1887. Whereupon, Anson B. Norton, a former Operator, was appointed Manager of the Westfield Exchange.

Manager Daley officiated after Mr. Norton, and he was reported in the *Times and News-Letter* of Feb. 7, 1894, as having suddenly departed the previous week,—not an unusual occurrence.

The next month's issue contained a more cheery item: The office of the local telephone exchange has recently been decorated for the first time in many years and the appearance of the room has been greatly improved.

An item, reminiscent of good food and conviviality, appeared April 18, 1894: The new Park Square Hotel will be opened to the public next week.

The *Times and News Letter* proffered further conciliatory comments: "Manager Angier, of the local telephone exchange, is proving himself to be the right man in the right place, and he is doing all in his power to increase the efficiency of the service. A new long-distance telephone booth has just been put in the office, and now comes the most important addition in the shape of a new and modern switchboard, which takes the place of the old style, clumsy board that has done service for many years. Another great improvement is an additional line between this town and Springfield, so that hereafter two subscribers instead of one can talk with parties in that city."

In 1896 the Company moved its offices to #12 and #14 Parks Block, 2nd floor. This building was located on Elm Street between Church and Arnold Streets, adjoining what is now Landans Store. It was recently destroyed by fire.

Harry A. Fowler embarked upon the telephone business Feb. 15, 1897. He was born in Brooklyn June 13, 1876, three

months and six days after Alexander Graham Bell patented the "Electric Speaking Telephone." He came to Westfield in 1888, and when he became 21, he entered the employ of the Telephone Company. He worked as Central Office-Man, Installer, Repairman and Testman.

Manager John D. Angier continued as Manager until 1897 or 1898 when William A. Wood took the position, at the same address.

George B. Church was appointed Manager at Westfield in 1900. The Dec. 13, 1918, issue of the Westfield *Evening Journal* describes his earlier life: "Mr. Church was born in Great Barrington, coming to Westfield in 1894 to be Night Operator at the old office, then in Parks Block on Elm Street. In 1897 he went to Pittsfield in the employ of the telephone company, returning to Westfield in 1900 to be Manager of the local office.

A Class F exchange was established at Huntington in 1902, with 12 subscribers, according to a later Topics, and Wm. P. Ring said that it was located at the Cross Drug Store. Mr. Ring reported that a trunk line was run from Westfield to Becket and, at first, public telephones were placed in stores, which later became the sites of Class F exchanges. It was not unusual to have two or more of these agencies operating on this one trunk line, with several subscribers connected for good measure.

William P. Ring was transferred from Springfield to Westfield in January, 1905, as a Combination Man. He joined the Company in Springfield June 22, 1903.

About 1905, Class F Agency exchanges began to be established in smaller communities and the following was learned from Mr. Ring: The first exchange in Blandford was of the magneto type and was located in Mr. Peeble's store. The first Agency in Southwick was opened in Charles Reed's store, and the one at Chester occupied Keefe's store. Becket, which was then part of the Westfield Area, had its agency quarters at McCormack's store. These store keepers served the public in a telephone capacity when not attending to their customers. A switchboard, in some cases, was put in the proprietor's living quarters, which were usually in the same building, and was

attended to by members of the family or by someone employed as an operator.

The Aug. 15, 1905, *Hampshire Gazette* speaks of another telephone extension. "Damon and Brooks have the job of drawing of poles for a telephone line between Blandford and Otis. Raymond Bradford, with men and teams, has gone to draw the poles on the line there."

The Middlefield exchange was opened in the home of Mrs. Helen Cook, the Agent, in October, 1905, where it remained until March 13, 1940, when it was converted to Community Dial.

From the *Gazette*, it is learned that the trolley line between Huntington and Westfield was opened early in October, 1905, by the Western Massachusetts Street Railway Co., 64 years after the advent of the steam cars through this village.

A Class F Office was established at Granville Dec. 24, 1905. The Magneto Exchange was located in Mr. Colton's store at Granville Center, up on the hill, and started with 21 subscribers.

Noble and Cooley Co., the world's largest manufacturer of toy drums, through their foresight in anticipating the importance of this new invention, had secured telephone service from the Westfield exchange many years before, and were thus better prepared to "drum up business." In fact, this business term may have originated at the Granville Drum Shop.

The advent of 'Telephone Topics' occurred in May, 1907, and Westfield was honored with an important bit of news in that number: The Company has just completed a one-story building on School Street, Westfield, and common battery apparatus and equipment is now being placed. The cut-over from the old to the new office will be made early in June, and a public opening will be held a little later.

An item about the new exchange appeared the next month: "The 'Cut-over' to the new building, which is equipped with a No. 1 relay switchboard, was accomplished June 1st, with little or no interruption to the service. Co-incident with the transfer of traffic to the new building, the handling of toll traffic was transferred to the Springfield office, whereby the toll work is more expeditiously handled than is permitted in small ex-

changes having a few trunks, with an outlet in one direction only. Manager Church, and subscribers generally, have expressed themselves as greatly pleased with the new and modern equipment, and a much higher grade of service is noticeable. Miss Bertha M. Dodge and Miss Bernice LeBrazee were assigned to the positions of Chief Operator and Supervisor, respectively, at the time the new switchboard was installed."

Mrs. Harry Fowler was a telephone girl in her own right. Miss Maude Beals started as an Operator, probably about 1895, and later became Chief Operator, replacing Emma Pease. Miss Beals, in the fall of 1906, was married to Harry Fowler.

Miss Emma Pease was the first Westfield Chief Operator, being appointed by Manager Church in November, 1901. She was to supervise the operating, see that calls were answered promptly, and investigate complaints. There were 9 girls and nearly 400 patrons.

Ina Holcomb became the new Clerk in the Westfield office in July, 1907.

Harry A. Fowler, according to Mr. Ring, served a short time as Westfield's Wire Chief after the reorganization, and was succeeded by Frank Rogers, who had come from Boston with Frank Wilkins, to oversee the installation of the common battery office. Mr. Fowler then resumed his work as Test-man and looked after the line assigning as well.

May, 1909, Topics tells of a sleet storm in the Berkshire Hills which put the Middlefield exchange out of commission. Ten poles were knocked down by the weight of the sleet, and the high wind. The estimated size of the sleet loaded wires was 2½ inches in diameter. The Blandford exchange also suffered damage and Wire Chief Rogers had men at work Saturday and Sunday, May 1st and 2nd, repairing it.

Wayne D. Wood was employed April 5, 1909, as a Collector in the Westfield business office. In 1910 he became the first Springfield District rural telephone salesman. After covering the district, with the aid of a horse and buggy, he settled down again in Westfield as Collector.

Miss Lillian Cosby, Senior Operator at the Westfield Exchange, won a \$400 piano given by a firm to the most popular young woman in Westfield, according to Topics.

The flying squadron, in charge of F. B. Watson, made a house to house canvass in Westfield in August, 1910, and secured 33 new subscribers.

In the early part of 1911, Manager Church was elected Master of the Westfield Grange and was reported as cultivating an extensive acquaintance among the farmers.

Miss Catherine Martin accepted the position of Clerk in the Westfield office in January, 1911, recently made vacant by the resignation of Miss Josephine Moore.

The Huntington Exchange was highlighted by Topics of Oct., 1912: The Company has leased two rooms in the Cross Block at Huntington, and has moved the Central office from the rear of the building to these front rooms. There are now 140 subscribers in this exchange, having grown from 12 subscribers in the past 10 years, and the former one-position switchboard has been replaced by a two-position board of 70 local and 20 trunk lines, giving ample facilities for the steadily increasing business. Mary Brennan, Nellie Brennan and Horace Alvord comprise the operating force.

Topics reported that in 1914 the Southwick magneto exchange was located in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Vining. Miss Jane Sathory, sister of Mary Sathory (later Chief Operator at Westfield), lived at the Vining home and very naturally worked into the operator's position. Southwick's board then had 45 lines. Mrs. Agnes Drummond became the next Agent.

A Westfield telephone party was described in the April, 1915, Topics: The first annual banquet of the Westfield exchange was held Monday evening, February 22, at the new Park Square Hotel, with an attendance of about forty people. George Washington hats were worn and hatchets were provided as favors. Harry A. Fowler, of the Plant Dept., acted as toastmaster. Interesting remarks were made by District Traffic Chief Chapman of Springfield, Manager Emerson of Holyoke, and Manager Church of Westfield. The entertainment of the evening consisted of solos by Chief Operator Bertha M. Dodge and Wire Chief Harry H. Pettibone. Belle J. Merill and Frank Rogers of Springfield gave a very fine demonstration of modern dances. Dancing was then enjoyed and it was unanimously voted to make the banquet an annual event.

In April, 1916, District Inspector Walter W. Farrington, of the Springfield District, was promoted to Wire Chief of the Westfield exchange in place of H. H. Pettibone, resigned. After serving in the war, "Hap" resumed his telephone career in Springfield.

William P. Ring was appointed Wire Chief at Westfield Oct. 15, 1917, and was associated with the exchange for many years. He first joined the Company June 22, 1903, in Springfield as a "Ground Hog," which euphonious name, "Pitt" said, referred to a man who dug holes for telephone poles. After a little training in line work, he was transferred to Westfield in January, 1905, as a Combination Man. After becoming a Line Repairman and filling a few other positions, he was appointed Wire Chief.

The Westfield exchange area, "Pitt" recalled, included Middlefield and Becket in those days. After the horse and buggy era, came the motorcycle period which lasted a few years before the Model T became standard equipment. These mechanical devices, however, had to give way to snowshoes after a snow storm. A casual opening of a diary, which "Pitt" kept for many years, revealed that on Dec. 30, 1917, the temperature was 22 degrees below zero all day, but it moderated the next day, rising to 21 below.

The *Valley Echo* of Dec. 13, 1918, a Westfield Weekly newspaper, gave first page prominence to Manager Church: George B. Church for the past 19 years Manager of the telephone company in this district, has resigned his position to take effect as soon as the company can choose his successor. Mr. Church has accepted a responsible position in Springfield in an entirely different line of business. Mr. Church is President of the Board of Trade and has been active in all public matters in Westfield, and a very general regret will be felt at his leaving town.

John F. Shaw was appointed Manager at Westfield in January, 1919, succeeding George B. Church. John was formerly Manager at Great Barrington. He went to work for the Telephone Company in Worcester in 1916 and, on March 10, 1918, was appointed Manager at Great Barrington.

There was a small picture of the Westfield Telephone build-

ing on School Street in the Nov., 1919, Topics, which showed the employees seated and standing on the front steps. It was the 250th Anniversary of the town and the building was ornamented with flags and bunting. It was also the 12th anniversary of the present building, it being that time since they moved from their old quarters with the magneto system to the present location with the common battery. The employees, who were not shown very clearly, were:

Front row, Cashier C. M. Martin, Operator S. M. Delsky, Chief Operator B. M. Dodge, Supervisor L. C. Fairbrother, Operator R. E. Bell.

Second row, Operators M. I. Ferriter, A. T. Quimper, O. M. Sundberg, B. Ekholm.

Third row, Operators B. J. Merrill, H. L. Leonard.

Fourth row, Operator B. B. Schurman, Lineman J. Baker, Operators A. M. Cleary, E. G. Davidson.

Fifth row, Wire Chief W. P. Ring, Collector W. D. Wood, Operator T. Sullivan, Test-man H. A. Fowler.

Sixth row, Manager J. F. Shaw.

Topics reported that Cecelia Ripley took over the Blandford Agency in 1919, and continued its supervision for twenty years, assisted by Mary Brennan.

On Dec. 1, 1919, John Shaw, after officiating as Manager of the Westfield exchange a little less than a year, was transferred to Northampton as Manager.

Robert D. Fuller, of the Commercial force at Springfield, was advanced to the Managership at Westfield. "Bob" started his telephone career in Worcester, March 17, 1912. He was appointed Manager at Great Barrington March, 1916, Commercial Representative at Springfield June, 1919, and then came to Westfield.

On April 29, 1920, Mr. Fuller stated that since becoming Manager in December, 1919, he had not received a single complaint of Westfield Exchange service,—which was quite a feather in the employees' caps.

Another excerpt, regarding "Bob," appeared in the Sept., 1920, Topics: "The effects of a severe thunder shower on telephone service were effectively impressed upon the citizens of





WESTFIELD EXCHANGE AREA DEPARTMENT HEADS—1920

*Left to right:* Robert D. Fuller, Manager; Bertha M. Dodge, Chief Operator; William P. Ring, Wire Chief.



Westfield by Manager Fuller. Through the courtesy of Williams & Harden, druggists, Manager Fuller was enabled to display many samples of damaged material in the window of their store.

“That this proved a successful publicity move is borne out by the receipt of only three complaints, although the extent of the damage necessitated four days’ work on the part of the Plant, and Manager Fuller is kind enough to say a mighty fine job was done at that.”

Wayne D. Wood was appointed Commercial Representative May 3, 1920, and in June, 1922, he was transferred to the Springfield business office as Counter Representative.

Hugh A. Lamb joined the Company at Westfield August 9, 1920, as an Installer, and soon became a Combination Man, doing installation and repair work. After some work on the Central Office switchboard and customers’ PBXs, he was assigned to the test board. Harry Fowler, who was Testman at that time, also looked after the line assigning. When this latter function increased to greater proportions, Hugh Lamb was appointed the official Line Assigner.

Laura E. Whitney was transferred from the Palmer Business office to the Westfield office June 17, 1922, having started with the Company in Palmer, Nov. 8, 1920. The Westfield Business office then qualified for only one girl and Laura took in the payments, treated the accounts, took applications, wrote service orders, and figured adjustments. Later she was appointed Cashier and Service Representative.

On Dec. 3, 1923, George F. Cheney was appointed Manager at Westfield to succeed Robert D. Fuller, transferred to the Managership of the Northampton Exchange. Mr. Cheney had served in various positions in Pittsfield, North Adams, and Palmer before his assignment to Westfield.

Conductor (after stumbling over obstacle in aisle): “Madam, you must not leave your valise in the aisle.”

Colored Lady: “Fo’ de land sakes, Mistah Conductah, dat ain’t no valise. Dat’s mah foot!”

Bertha M. Dodge was transferred to the Division Traffic office in January, 1925, her position as Chief Operator at West-

field being assigned to Lillian C. Fairbrother on March 1, 1925.

Mrs. Fairbrother entered the employ of the Company June 17, 1906, as an Operator in the Westfield office and received promotion to the grade of Junior Supervisor March 14, 1910. Nov. 6, 1911, she was advanced to Supervisor and served efficiently in that capacity until March 4, 1923, when she was transferred to the District Training Department.

Robert M. Hodgson was made Manager of the Westfield Exchange in November, 1925. "Bob" entered the employ of the Company in July, 1923, as Collector at Greenfield, and a year later he was transferred to the Springfield Commercial office.

In February, 1926, Howard W. Reed succeeded Mr. Hodgson as Manager at Westfield, Mr. Hodgson being transferred to North Adams. Mr. Reed entered the Company on Nov. 13, 1923, in the Plant Dept. at Greenfield. June 29, 1925, he transferred to the Commercial Dept. as a Commercial Representative at Holyoke and since then has had experience in various capacities in several commercial offices.

Miss Mary A. Sathory was employed Aug. 11, 1926, as a local Operator, and, remaining in Westfield, she attained to the position of Chief Operator.

Edward P. Warner, according to Dec., 1926, Topics, was appointed Manager of the Westfield Exchange area to fill the vacancy made by Howard W. Reed, who left the employ of the Company to enter the chain store business in Boston.

Allen Drury, of the Boston Office, in October, 1927, was assigned to the Managership at Westfield in the place of E. P. Warner, who was transferred to Northampton.

Dec., 1929, Topics—Huntington Automatic Office.

The first installation in the New England Company territory of the community-type step-by-step dial office was cut over at Huntington on Dec. 7, 1929. On the evening preceding the cut-over, about 200 town and telephone people gathered in the Town Hall for a demonstration and moving pictures on the use of the dial telephone. Manager Allan L. Drury extended a brief greeting to the people.

This office is entirely unattended and 100% automatic. It serves the entire community of Huntington which now has approximately 175 lines. Subscribers of Huntington are able



SPRINGFIELD COUNCIL. PIONEERS, DINNER—1944

*Table for Committee, left to right:* Mary L. Purves, dinner; Etta L. Jones, publicity; Winifred E. Daly, program; Mary A. O'Donnell, Council Chairman and master of ceremonies; Margaret E. Grady, entertainment; Elizabeth A. Lyons (not a member) tickets; C. Harry Knox, general chairman, at end of next table, E. Warner Eldridge.





SPRINGFIELD COUNCIL, PIONEERS, DINNER—1944

*Table in foreground, left to right: Mrs. and Mr. William F. Langan, Mrs. and Mr. Martin F. Kelly, Miss Theresa A. Tierney, Miss Loretta L. Kennedy, Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Lyons.*





to dial one another mechanically and without any outside connections whatsoever. Moreover, Worthington, Becket, Westfield and Chester calls come into the Huntington frame in calling Huntington subscribers or in dialing one another.

Customers by dialing "O" for the toll or information operator will find that their service is not suffering for lack of personal contact. Emergency alarms will ring into the parent master office at Westfield; but the only human attendance will be the periodic visits for battery care and general routine tests.

Huntington is one of the field-planned jobs, and was planned by Foreman Walter McDonald, who is now directly in charge of Installation, reporting to Supervising Foreman, C. E. Davis.

District Supt., W. J. Reid, and Supervisor of Installation, H. J. Hebert, are rather proud of their new "toy," and justly so, if this little 21 x 21 office will perform the functions expected of it. In fact, it is probably the birth of a new and most practicable series of community "hearts" in telephone service, being at once efficient, serviceable and economical.

## CHAPTER 25

### *William J. Denver Chapter, Telephone Pioneers of America*

THE Telephone Pioneers of America was organized on November 2, 1911, at a meeting of over 200 men and women, who had been connected with the telephone industry prior to 1891. It was deemed fitting to meet in Boston, the birthplace of the telephone, and those present had the pleasure of hearing an address by Alexander Graham Bell.

The purpose of the Society is stated in Section 2 of Article I, of the Constitution:

“The Association is formed for the purpose of recalling and perpetuating the facts, traditions and memories attaching to the early history of the telephone system; preserving the names and records of the participants in the establishment and extension of this great system of electrical intercommunication; the promotion, renewal and continuance of the friendships made during the progress of the telephone industry between those interested therein; and the encouragement of such other meritorious objects consistent with the foregoing as may be desirable.”

Excerpts from the Dec., 1921, Topics follow:

“Telephone Pioneers of America celebrated the organization’s tenth birthday at the St. Louis convention on October 24th and 25th, when it adopted a new constitution that greatly enlarges its activities. President H. B. Thayer, of the American

Telephone and Telegraph Co., elected head of the Pioneers last year, opened the St. Louis convention, which was attended by more than 700, including Pioneers and their families.

“Suggestions had been made at the meeting of Pioneers in Montreal last year that the constitution should allow for the organization of local chapters of Pioneers.

“Mr. E. K. Hall supported the plan for local chapters, saying that in the past, the Pioneers’ activities have consisted solely of one annual pilgrimage to visit some of the telephone family in some relatively distant part of the country. This year we have the largest convention we have ever had, and we have less than one-fifth of the membership present.”

The Thomas Sherwin Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers of America was organized July 31, 1922, in keeping with the new plan. Thomas Sherwin, a former President of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., was always actively interested in Pioneer affairs. This Chapter, being the first formed in New England, covered all of the Company’s territory, and welcomed all Telephone Employees or those of its associated interests, who had to their credit twenty-one years of service.

The William J. Denver Chapter was the next Chapter to be inaugurated in the Company’s territory, and the Nov., 1922, Topics gave an account of this meeting: “A large gathering of the Telephone Pioneers of America, employees of our Company in Springfield and adjacent cities and towns, organized on Sept. 5, 1922, the William J. Denver Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers of America. The meeting was held in Springfield and the following officers were elected: President, Charles N. Tasker; Vice-President, S. F. Parker; Secretary-Treasurer, T. F. Maguire.

“The petition for a Charter together with a proposed set of the constitution and by-laws was forwarded through the New England Correspondent, Howard B. Emery.

“The name of the Chapter was selected in honor of Mr. William J. Denver who started the telephone business in Springfield and was a pioneer in the true meaning of the word.”

The petition for the Charter was signed by the following:

G. W. Hayden	A. L. Morrill
Miss C. Gregg	F. G. Kegler
T. F. Maguire	J. L. McElholm
G. H. Spelman	C. H. Durant
H. P. Greenwood	A. McAulay
D. L. Toomey	W. H. French
F. A. Watson	C. E. Williams
H. E. Hughes	E. H. Averill
M. H. Hammond	H. L. Jones
W. B. Northrup	G. H. Towey
F. C. Buck	A. S. Caverly
W. H. Parker	G. H. Garfield
A. E. Stone	

Charter Number 20 was granted Dec. 26, 1922, to the William J. Denver Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers of America at a meeting of the Executive Committee, held in New York.

All employees in Central and Western Massachusetts, South-Western New Hampshire and Vermont, who have been with the Company twenty-one years or more are eligible for membership.

June, 1923, Topics—The William J. Denver Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers held its first annual meeting in Springfield on the evening of April 27. There were present members from all parts of the Western Division and Vermont. General Plant Supt. Tasker, the first President of the Chapter, presided. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, S. F. Parker of Rutland, Vt.; Vice-President, F. E. Buck of Springfield; Secretary-Treasurer, T. F. McGuire, of Springfield; Delegate to Convention, T. F. McGuire; Alternate, F. G. Kegler of Gardner.

A committee composed of W. B. Northrup, R. C. Marden and E. T. Breslin was appointed to confer with other chapters in the territory of the New England Co. regarding the boundaries of each Chapter.

Oct., 1927, Topics—The annual meeting of the William J. Denver Chapter No. 20 was held on September 10, at Lake Chargogg . . . Webster Lake. Pioneers and members of their families, numbering one hundred thirty, assembled at the

banquet hall and enjoyed a chicken dinner. After the dinner the various Pioneers swapped reminiscences of the old Telephone Days and Albert T. Aldrich of Fitchburg was present and gave an account of running the first pair of wires from Boston to Worcester and spoke first over them.

Later a group picture was taken of 13 Pioneers whose service ranged from 30 to 47 years; among these were William H. French, Samuel Parker, William S. Shaw, Charles Newton, John Blair, T. F. Maguire and A. McAulay, all of Springfield, and also L. V. Gillis of Boston, Abbott Stone, John Wilkins and Charles H. Tenney of Worcester and Col. H. E. Hughes of Pittsfield.

An enjoyable boat ride was taken about the lake. F. K. Kenney of Worcester giving a diving and swimming exhibition. The outing was pronounced one of the best that was ever held under the auspices of the Chapter.

The Committee in charge of the outing was composed of H. E. Oakes, chairman; W. M. Pepper, James S. Gross, William H. Kavanaugh, M. H. Kenney, Edward F. Norton, George H. Spelman, Frank J. Rogers, L. H. Streeter, Fred A. Watson, Harry McIntyre, H. P. Murray, Eleanor Healey, W. Durant, C. Durant, Tom Hyland and Charlotte Gregg.

The following Pioneers have served the William J. Denver Chapter, Telephone Pioneers of America, as President, and Secretary-Treasurer.

*President*

1922-1923	Charles N. Tasker	Springfield
1923-1924	Samuel F. Parker	Rutland, Vt.
1924-1925	Harry E. Oakes	Springfield
1925-1926	John Blair	Worcester
1926-1927	Miss Loretta L. Kennedy	Springfield
1927-1928	John T. McLaughlin	Springfield
1928-1929	Thomas W. Hyland	Springfield
1929-1930	Augustus McAulay	Springfield
1930-1931	Frederick Rockhold	Springfield
1931-1932	John W. Forssen	Springfield
1932-1933	Harry H. Gallup	Springfield
1933-1934	Harry W. Dickinson	Springfield

1934–1935	Deane O. Howland	Worcester
1935–1936	Michael H. Kenney	Springfield
1936–1937	Michael H. Kenney	Springfield
1937–1938	George T. Fahey	Springfield
1938–1939	Thomas F. Kane	Worcester
1939–1940	C. Harry Knox	Springfield
1940–1941	Earl A. Kimberley	Pittsfield
1941–1942	Thomas J. Healey	Worcester
1942–1943	Peter F. Follett	Pittsfield
1943–1944	George A. Morley	Springfield
1944–1945	Carl A. Hiland	Springfield
1945–1946	Casimir A. Marcou	Springfield
1946–1947	Joel L. Hodges	Worcester
1947–1948	Katherine M. Colombo	Montpelier, Vt.
1948–1949	William H. Stirling	Fitchburg
1949–1950	Fred S. Bassett	Pittsfield
1950–1951	George W. Lowney	Worcester
1951–1952	Michael F. Coyne	Springfield
1952–1953	Percy E. Thompson	St. Albans, Vt.
1953–1954	Alton W. Clark	Gardner
1954–1955	John E. M. Wright	Pittsfield
1955–1956	Ralph M. Warren	Worcester
1956–1957	Martha H. Maloney	Springfield
1957–1958	Allan S. Morton	Burlington, Vt.
1958–1959	H. Scott Oleson	Fitchburg

*Secretary-Treasurer*

1922–1936	Thomas F. Maguire	Springfield
1936–1944	Walter P. Durant	Springfield
1944–1948	Rufus E. Davis	Springfield
1948–1958	Inez E. Kavanaugh	Springfield
1958–	Olympia H. Del Dotto	Springfield
1958–	Louise D. Wilson	Springfield

As the William J. Denver Chapter continued to grow it became quite a problem for a large number of members to get to Springfield, or any substitute city. In 1930 the establishment, within Chapters, of subdivisions known as Councils had been sanctioned. This permitted meetings in locations convenient for more members and the privilege of conducting business

and social features according to local desires. It was not until 1942 that four such councils were established with headquarters at Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester and Montpelier, Vermont, the territory of each conforming to its telephone district. The Council in Vermont chose to be named after one of the great Telephone Pioneers, Matt B. Jones. The other Councils at first were called the Pittsfield, Springfield and Worcester Councils. Later the name of the Springfield Council was changed to that of the Pioneer Valley Council, and the Pittsfield Council assumed the more inclusive name of the Berkshire Council. At the request of the Worcester Council on March 12, 1946, the formation of the Fitchburg Council was approved, which was composed of the Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner Exchange Areas. Later the name of this Council was changed to that of the Monachusett Council.

## CHAPTER 26

### *Springfield Exchange Area*

UPON the formation of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. on October 19, 1883, six divisions were established, one of which was the Western Division. Frank G. Daboll, who was formerly Superintendent of the Springfield Division of the Bay State Telephone Co., was appointed Superintendent of this Western Division, which included the territory from the Palmer Exchange Area west to the state line, but did not take in the Greenfield Area, which was made the headquarters of the Northern Division. Guy Carleton continued as Manager of the Springfield Exchange. The telephone quarters were still on the third floor of the Kinsman's block, corner of Main and Bridge Streets, where the Kresge 5 & 10 Cent Store Building is now located.

A news item pertaining to Longmeadow was noted in the Jan. 17, 1884, *Springfield Daily Union*: "Longmeadow wants telephonic connection with Springfield and some of its citizens are already moving in the matter. It is said that one of the difficulties in the way is the objection which might be made to running the wires across private property in the south part of the city."

The advent of telephone cable in Springfield was described in the *Republican* of Feb. 2, 1884: "The two new telephone cables which have recently been strung from the Central Office at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets to a point as far south as the Opera House are real curiosities in their way. Outwardly the cables present the appearance of ordinary lead water pipe  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch in diameter. Inside each of these pipes,



however, are 52 small copper wires. Each of these is covered with two thicknesses of cotton tightly wound and outside of the cotton is a coating of paraffine. It is over these small wires that the sound is transmitted, and to the uninitiated it seems a matter of wonder that with so many wires packed closely together there should be no confusion of sound. The cable is very heavy on account of its lead covering; but is very securely suspended and is a great improvement over the numerous lines of wire that have been in use."

Looking backward to the 1880s, brings to mind the renowned author, Edward Bellamy, who started his popular book "Looking Backward" in 1886. Mr. Bellamy was born in the Bellamy homestead, Chicopee Falls, and, in 1880, he and his brother Charles founded "The Daily News" of Springfield. "Looking Backward" portrays a socialistic utopia in the year 2000 and compares this peaceful state with the war-torn, poverty-stricken condition of his own day. It made such a profound impression that the Massachusetts Legislature passed laws permitting the cities to own and operate utilities and allowing them to set up stock piles of coal for the use of all citizens. This last measure was later declared unconstitutional.

On March 2, 1884, New England Telephone Co.'s stock sold at \$39 a share, while on April 20th that of American Bell Co. brought \$158. Springfield's 35,000 inhabitants raised \$60,000 for its library.

In April, 1884, the *Republican*, in reporting further improvement in telephone service, stated: "The telephone managers begin today the vexing work of cutting up the circuits on Armory hill, improving the service by making 16 or 18 circuits out of the present 8. The work will necessitate some crossing of wires, so that the would be users of telephones must have patience if their machines work spasmodically for two or three days. Poles have been set in Lyman street between Chestnut and the New York and New England Railroad depot, making a thoroughfare for more wires than could be used under the old scheme of hanging them on ridge-poles."

A thrilling innovation was reported in the *Republican* of May 28, 1884: "An order has been issued from the New England Telephone Co. giving all clerks, operators and "inside"

employees of the company a 10 days vacation during the summer. Manager Daboll has prepared a schedule of the vacations of the employees in his district, so arranged that all shall go and come between June 14 and September 1."

Miss Mary H. Rehm is one of the best operators in the telephone office, according to Topics. Her two sisters are also operators there.

"Say Mose, howcum you name dat 'Lectricity?"

"Well, you see, Sam, mah wife am Dinah and ah'se Mose and dynamos makes 'lectricity."

An important announcement appeared in the July 29, 1885, *Republican*:

"William J. Denver has been called to a field where his abilities as an electrician will have greater play than here, having been appointed Assistant General Manager of the New England Telephone Co. He will take up his new duties at Boston August 1.

"Mr. Denver has been in the telegraph business for 30 years, and established the Gold and Stock telephone office (Springfield Telephone Co.) when that was opened here in the early days of telephoning. His successor as Manager of the local Western Union office is his brother, Henry Denver, who previously held the position as Chief Operator."

In 1886 the divisions were abolished and Frank G. Daboll, who had been Western Division Supt., was appointed Manager of the Springfield Exchange, according to the Sept., 1908, Topics. Nothing was said as to whom the managers would report, but it is surmised that they reported to assistant general managers. Under the telephone classification in the 1886 and 1887 Springfield Business Directories, William J. Denver's name appeared as Assistant General Manager, while Frank G. Daboll was listed as Manager. In the 1888 Directory, the name of J. W. Duxbury took the place of William J. Denver.

Augustus McAulay entered the employ of the Company in 1888, and for a number of years travelled about New England helping to construct toll lines.

Martin A. Goodwin came to Springfield about 1889 and was connected with the central office. He was very popular with subscribers because of the courtesy and conscientiousness with

which he did his work; it being not uncommon to have a report of a defect accompanied by a request that Mr. Goodwin be assigned to repair it.

Mr. Goodwin began in Fall River in 1879, and spent about two years in that section. After a short period in Boston, with the Bay State Telephone Co., he went to Pittsfield for 8 years.

James A. Campbell was first employed in Springfield as groundman on April 14, 1891, and in May the next year he was transferred to Lowell.

Lexington, Mass., was the first exchange in the world to be operated on a common battery basis,—1893. Wellesley was equipped similarly in 1894.

Lovell B. Stowe was first employed by the New England Telephone Co. in August, 1893, as groundman at Springfield, according to a later Topics. In December of the same year, he went to Burlington as night operator and the spring of 1894 qualified as combination man, one year later going to White River Jct. as manager. In 1896 he returned to Burlington, taking the position of manager.

Raymond O. Nickerson, according to the *Republican*, came to Springfield from Boston in 1894 to serve as chief operator and wire chief for the Western and Northern divisions of the company. He came from Woods' Harbor, N. S., to Boston, where he entered the employ of the American Telephone Co. in 1888, and served first as an operator and then as assistant wire chief.

Henry Denver became connected with the Springfield office in 1895. He was associated with the Western Union Telegraph Co. for years, and aided his brother, William J. Denver, in organizing the Springfield Telephone Co.

Frank C. Buck started work with the Company Jan. 1, 1896, as a collector. To facilitate these collections, he used a bicycle for which a monthly compensation of \$2.08 was allowed. The busier pay stations had to be collected every morning and then a bundle of bills awaited him for collection. After completing his collections on Fridays and enjoying an early supper, he returned to the office and attended the switchboard from 6 P.M. to 7 A.M., thus enabling the night operator to have a

night off and himself a Saturday off. A collector in those pre-inflation days received \$25 a month.

The switchboard, Frank relates, was a magneto multiple board with 14 positions, and the drops had to be restored by hand. There was only one operator after 9 o'clock, which did not permit any napping—although a gong sounded with each incoming call. Newspapers, liverystables and doctors seemed to keep the annunciators dropping.

R. O. Nickerson was Chief Operator and performed the functions of a Toll Wire Chief, testing the toll lines each morning, and repairing the switchboard; which operations he taught Frank to do. The American Telephone Co. had an operating room with a few positions and a test board next to the local operating room, and calls to places outside the New England Co's. territory were switched to the American Co's. board.

Charlotte Gregg entered the employment of the Company Nov. 7, 1896, as a clerk, working for Giles Taintor, Division Supt., and was advanced to a bookkeeper the next year.

Mr. Taintor remained only a short time and was succeeded by James H. Barry, who had been Supt. of the Northern Division for two years. (The position of Division Supt. was evidently restored.)

Emma Luther, who later became Mrs. Courtlandt L. Kites, started as an operator in July, 1897, the switchboard being in the Kinsman's block. The three toll operators were Nettie Baldwin, Cora Hinckley and Eva Ball. Eva Frost, who was very quick with her hands, was the toll switch operator. Other operators mentioned by Mrs. Kites, were Alice Bailey, Mabel Lamberton, Marion Langdon, Amy Lane, Minnie Webber and Alice Daley. When subscribers wanted to get information about the election returns, fires, baseball results, etc., they simply asked the operators. Mrs. Kites well remembers the avalanche of calls when the Old City Hall burned in 1905. She was appointed a supervisor prior to leaving in February, 1906, to become PBX operator at Rood and Woodbury's. Eva Frost also left then, but returned later as Mrs. Bryson and became the matron of the rest room on Worthington Street, where she remained many years.

Frank Cignoli and Walter D. Taylor also worked there, according to Mrs. Kites. Frank Buck remembered them, as follows: Frank Cignoli was a short, slight man who could climb a telephone pole like a monkey. They used him a great deal on toll line troubles. After working a number of years, he left to go with the Southern New England Telephone Co.

Walter D. Taylor was an outstanding foreman of Central Office installation, working out of Boston. Later he had charge of the installation of the Holyoke and Springfield common battery offices. He married Winifred Sellew, a popular Springfield local operator.

Early in 1898, Lovell B. Stowe was transferred from Burlington, where he was Manager, to Springfield as Division Cashier.

The preparations for opening the Chicopee Exchange were described in the *Republican* of May 13, 1898: "The local exchange is being fitted up at 561 Front Street. The entire first floor of the house has been leased by the Company and the operator will live on the same floor with her office. Sixty nine new 'phones have been received, which, with the subscribers already on the Springfield circuit, will make the number of subscribers to open with between 150 and 175. The Company expects to have the local exchange in running order by June 1. The poles are about all set and the wire is being stretched. This involves the trimming of a good many shade trees."

On June 16, 1898, it was learned from the *Republican* that the new Chicopee telephone exchange was now ready for business, and that many new subscriptions had been received from the hotels, physicians and private residences, and that a number of business places were talking of having instruments put in.

The location of Chicopee's first exchange was where it is today, at the corner of Front and Bemis Place. Mrs. H. A. Cleveland was the operator, chief operator and manager—all in one. Herbert Sherwin of Hyde Park, Vt. was the night operator.

The papers were full of news regarding the war with Spain. The U.S. forces were trying to get in the harbor of Santiago de Cuba, the American Squadron having bombarded it June 3, 1898.

The *Republican* of July 23, 1898, reported favorable news regarding Manager Daboll: "The employees in the telephone exchange, on July 21, 1898, presented Mr. Daboll with a mahogany morris chair on the event of his recent promotion." This promotion made Mr. Daboll the Supt. of the Western Division again, in place of Mr. James Barry, who was transferred to the Central Division at Lowell, in the same capacity.

The Company's move from the Kinsman's Block to 99 Bridge Street was described in the Topics of Jan., 1914, as follows: "In 1899, the office was moved to Bridge Street, the Company having purchased the building formerly occupied by the Parlor Theatre (where Steiger's Man's Shop is now located). Here a common battery system was cut over on Feb. 4, 1899. This was one of the first boards of this type in the Company's territory and attracted a great deal of attention at the public opening. The ultimate multiple capacity was 4200 lines and when installed the exchange had 1395 subscribers. The new board was equipped with 14 positions. These quarters were thought to be adequate to meet the growth for a long term of years but they were outgrown in less than ten."

At the time of the move, Frank Buck was made Central Office Repairman, looking after the switchboards.

"Billy" French, who had done this work when the office was in the Kinsman's block, became Assistant Manager of the Springfield exchange. He started as a Messenger boy with the Springfield Telephone Co. in March, 1880, and soon was made an Operator. When the growing business needed the services of a Collector, he was appointed. Then he became an Instrument Assembler and a Switchman.

Ida Cross, one of the outstanding operators, started work March 1, 1900.

L. B. Stowe was appointed Manager at Springfield in August, 1900, having been District Cashier.

Loretta L. Kennedy started work for the Company Oct. 20, 1902, as an Operator, in the Bridge Street Building.

About 1902, Augustus McAulay was appointed Division Foreman. He had transferred to Springfield in 1898, becoming the Assistant Division Foreman in 1901. He joined the Company in 1888.

Edward M. Stannard came with the Company in 1902 as an Inspector in the Plant Dept.

James Campbell was appointed Assistant Division Foreman. He was promoted to Station Foreman of the Holyoke District in 1900.

Charles E. Lyons, a native of Springfield, started to work for the Telephone Company at Springfield in April, 1903, serving as a groundman in the Plant force.

About 1903 or 1904, R. O. Nickerson was transferred to the Division Traffic office and at one time he was Toll Inspector for the whole New England territory.

Frank Buck took his place as Chief Operator. Among Frank's duties was hiring the operators, of which there were about 150 when the local operating office took over the long distance operating done by the American Telephone Co.

William P. Ring came to work for the Company June 22, 1903, digging holes on Rogers Ave. for farmers' lines. In those days the "ground hogs," as they were picturesquely known, were laid off for the winter, when the temperature was often down to about 22 degrees below zero. Frank McInnis had him transferred to the American Telephone Co. to learn line work, and then "Pitt" was sent to Westfield, January, 1905, as a Combination Man.

Augustus McAulay became Supt. of Construction in 1904. He worked up to this position by his ability and diligence.

An Agency telephone office was started in North Wilbraham Jan. 18, 1904, in the home of Mrs. Emma Mowry, who was its first Agent. There were only two lines in use at the beginning.

"I would like a pound of your golf sausage," she said to the West Water Street butcher.

"Golf sausage? Sorry, Madam, but we don't handle it. We have liverwurst, ham sausage and other kinds, but no golf sausage."

"Oh, dear, I'm so sorry. My husband said he much preferred the kind made in links."—*Republican*.

About 1904 East Longmeadow, which had been served by rural lines from Springfield, was furnished a small village switchboard, and George B. Robinson was appointed Agent. Mr. Robinson was engaged in the quarry business and

also was the owner of a store on the east side of Prospect Street a few hundred feet south of the Square. Here, Miss Susan F. Delehanty went to work as the first Operator. In 1911, Miss Delehanty succeeded Mr. Robinson as Agent. An interesting account of this exchange, as related by Miss Delehanty, is given in Chapter 22.

Leroy F. Rodimon was one of the "Bridge Street Gang." He started work in his native town of Easthampton in 1901, as night operator, working from 6 P.M. to 7 A.M. Shortly after the exchange was moved to the Newkirk block, Manager Proctor transferred Roy to Northampton to do installing and to attend to subscribers' batteries, the jars of which occasionally needed replenishing with salammoniac powder. It was in 1903 or 1904 before the first barrel of dry cell batteries was delivered.

In the spring of 1905, Leroy recalled, was transferred to Springfield and the next year he became a Division Installer. A few Agents from Boston traveled around selling telephones, allowing three months' free trial. Supt. Daboll sent out construction gangs to set poles and run the iron wire to the new customers' premises. Roy went about exchanges in Western Mass. and Southern Vt., installing the instruments. He walked about the towns carrying quite a heavy bag on his back and the telephones in his arms. He was allowed to hire a team for the outlying sections. Arriving at a premise, he had to dig quite a deep hole, throw in from 50 to 100 feet of wire, attach one end of it to the building, and then fill the hole. This constituted the 'ground',—necessitated by there being only one iron wire to a line.

Vertran F. Jones started his telephone career after Labor Day, 1904, as a Stock Room Helper. Their quarters were in back of the commercial office in the Bridge Street Building, according to "Vert." After a year he was transferred to the Installation and Repair Dept. In a year and a half he returned to the Stock Room as Clerk.

In 1905 Harry Oakes was assigned to the position of securing permits for pole and underground terminal locations in the prescribed area in Springfield. Harry started at Orange in 1894 as relief operator and in 1896 was advanced to night





FIRST THREE SITES IN SPRINGFIELD

Center, Haynes Opera House. Bottom, Gilmans Block. Top, Parlor Theatre Building.



LOVELL B. STOWE—1917

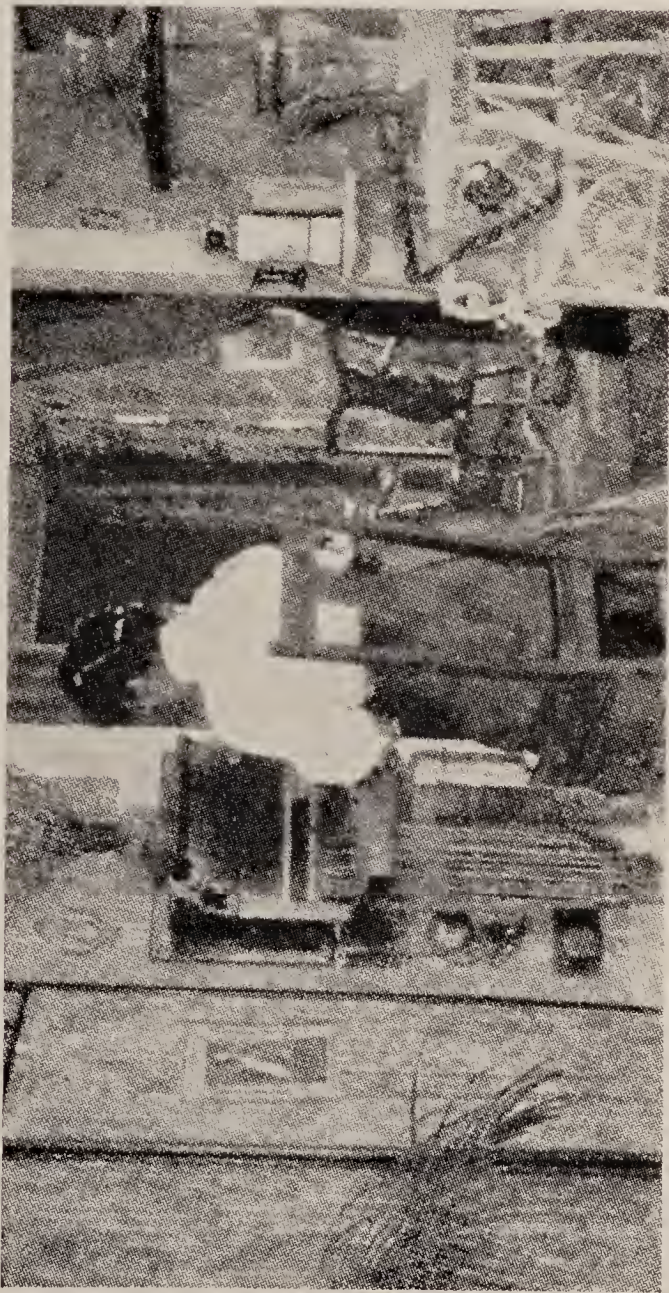


HARRY L. SANBORN—1920



CHIEF OPERATORS AND ASSISTANTS—1911

*Front row, left to right:* May Donovan, Julia Lyons, Daisy Lane, Loretta Kennedy, Stella Reimers, Helen McKenna. *Back row:* Margaret Reid, Agnes Dowd, Lula Cambell, Mollie Cummings, Alice Mansfield, Eva Foster, Helen Downs, Theresa Corridan.



CLASS F EXCHANGE AT GRANVILLE  
CORNERS—1910

Mrs. Charles Tryon, the Agent, operates the wall-type switchboard in her parlor.



GEORGE H. CAMPBELL, STOCK CLERK, STANDING AT LOCAL TEST BOARD, 99 BRIDGE STREET—ABOUT 1908

operator. In 1899 he was transferred to this position in Greenfield and did some collecting during the day.

Early in 1901 Harry was transferred from Greenfield to Springfield as night operator for the American Telephone Co. After serving in the Manager's office in the New England Co., at Springfield, as clerk and pay station attendant a short time, he became timekeeper and paymaster for the District Foreman.

Harold W. Bates, according to Topics, was transferred from Athol to central office and testboard work at Springfield in December, 1905. Entering the telephone business in June, 1902, at Barre, Mass., as a night operator, Harold soon found his niche in the Plant Dept., to which he transferred in June, 1904, at Athol.

Frederick W. Williams started work in 1906 in the stock-room at Springfield.

Nelson C. Pardee also started work in 1906, reporting at the shops on Farnsworth Street, South Boston, known as the Mechanical Dept. Later, he transferred to the General Construction Dept., where he worked in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts until 1909. Since then Nelson has worked at the Springfield office and has successfully handled switchboard repairs, M.D.F. work and power maintenance.

The *Republican* of June 3, 1906, reported the following: "Springfield has the honor of making the machine to break the record between New York and Boston, a 40 H.P. Knox car with a waterless engine, doing the trick Memorial Day,—503 miles in 19 hours and 53 minutes, an average of 25 miles an hour. The sextet making the trip on Memorial Day were George Kerr, H. L. Bowles, P. B. Moore, A. E. Dennison, Harry Corson and W. E. Wright. During the whizzing trip the speeders say they are innocent of toppling over farmers and pedestrians, and didn't have to alight to assume a reclining position beneath the car."

Grace and Sally Darling became identified with the Revenue Accounting Office at Springfield in 1906, Sally starting December 3 and Grace, the day before Christmas. Grace worked in the Company's Bridge Street Building "rating" toll

tickets,—that is, figuring the tariff for each ticket. Some of the girls working in that building were Clara Charles, Isabel Hall, Eleanor Healey, Etta Rice and Catherine Adams. C. H. Hoyt was the Auditors Chief Clerk, R. P. Jones being in charge of the Revenue Accounting Dept. at Boston.

Sally Darling started in the toll section of the Auditing Dept., which was located in the Fuller Building (now the Valley Bank & Trust Co. corner Main and Bridge). She sorted tickets and made out the bills in exemplary handwriting. Anna McCarthy had charge of that phase of the auditing.

In 1907 the Accounting office was moved to the Wason Building, 33 Lyman St. Here, Grace Darling became a book-keeper. She kept the accounts of the Great Barrington and Westfield exchanges, about 2000, in her big ledger, making out the bills and addressing the envelopes in fine handwriting. Regardless of later promotions, the sisters still retain fond memories of the days when they kept their own ledgers and wrote out the bills in long hand.

The Telephone Topics made its appearance in May, 1907, and, from then on, it has provided generously of the telephone information contained herein, as well as some given previously.

The May, 1907, Telephone Topics, the first issue, refers to twelve private branch exchanges with 115 stations which had been installed recently: The Hotel Henking had 50 stations; the Springfield Provision Co., and the Springfield *Daily News* each had 11 stations, and the rest ranged from 3 to 8 stations. There was a total of 58 branch exchanges in the Springfield District with 1082 stations. This class of service was finding much favor with large business houses, hotels and factories. The Phelps Publishing Co. had the first PBX, according to W. H. French—a small turret connecting 15 stations.

The difficulty involved in training new operators in Springfield led to the appointment of Mrs. Charles W. Lemont as Instructor. Mrs. Lemont was the former Alice V. Hitchcock, a telephone Supervisor at Portland, Maine, and was just married to Charles W. Lemont, the well-known Toll Wire Chief of the Western Division at Springfield.

The first Telephone Topics also reported the following:

A police signal system has recently been installed by the Company at Indian Orchard, consisting of nine call boxes and a small switchboard at the Orchard police station. The system is of great benefit in keeping patrolmen in close touch with headquarters, and the Department is well pleased with the new system.

About 1907 the Springfield telephone business had become so large that it was necessary to form a local wire chiefs organization, and an office with a test board was opened on the first floor.

James W. Lewis was transferred to Springfield in 1907 as a Substation Installer. He entered the employ of the Company in 1904 as an Installer at Pittsfield and was transferred soon afterwards to the Boston Division, where he was engaged on switchboard installation in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

The Operators retiring room in the Springfield Exchange was refurnished, and Mrs. Mabel H. Andrews was installed as matron. Reading matter and periodicals were provided, to the gratification of all.

George H. Campbell went to work for the Company in 1907. He spent a few weeks with Fred Williams at the Indian Orchard office. Fred was in charge of the 2-position magneto switchboard and also did the installing and repairing of telephones in Orchard and Ludlow. For further telephonic experience, George was permitted to attend the four public telephones in the Bridge Street Building for a few months and then was assigned to the stock room. The telephones did not come ready to install, George recalled; the cords, receivers, transmitters, bells, condensers,—all were ordered separately and assembled in the stock room.

June, 1907, Topics—Wholesale Moving.

The Company has outgrown its quarters at 99 and 103 Bridge Street, and to provide room for additional local switchboard equipment, it has been found necessary to remove the Superintendent's office to a new location. New offices have been leased in the Kinsman's building, corner of Main and Bridge Streets, and Division Supt. Daboll, Division Foreman McAulay and Division Cashier Stowe, with their office force,

are now occupying their new quarters. Assistant Manager French and Special Agent Connor have moved their offices to the second floor of the Company building, and Cashier Carter has moved from the east side to the west side of the first floor.

E. M. Stannard, formerly switchboardman, was promoted to Chief Operator in the Springfield exchange in August, 1907, succeeding Frank C. Buck, who was appointed Maintenance Foreman.

Further PBX news was given in the Sept., 1907, Topics: A new two position No. 1 PBX has been recently installed in the large department store of Meekins, Packard and Wheat at Springfield (corner of Main and Hillman). This is the first board of this type to be installed in this city, being equipped with lamp signals throughout. They are at present running fifty local lines and five trunks to the exchange, with an ultimate capacity of 120 lines and 30 trunks. Boards of this type are soon to be installed at the Stevens-Duryea Automobile Co. and Stevens Arms and Tool Co.'s plants.

Frank Spencer was appointed to the position of Auditors Chief Clerk in the Western Division in November, 1907, C. H. Hoit returning to the Boston Office.

Feb., 1908, Topics—Charles E. Davis was appointed Head Switchboardman at Springfield on February 11, 1908. "Charlie" started his telephone career Jan. 26, 1906, in Nashua, N.H., installing central office equipment. He worked for William T. Durfee, General Foreman, in Portsmouth, N.H., and in several Maine communities. After helping with the Worcester "Park" cutover in January, 1907, he went to Brockton for a year.

May, 1908, Topics—Percy H. Cobb, the new XA Clerk in the Western Division, has already become very popular with all his associates in Springfield on account of his sunny disposition and willingness to help. Mr. Cobb is an authority on most any feature of the XA work, as demonstrated before a Chief Operators meeting recently.

The Operating Reorganization, which took effect August 1, 1908, established the three different departments—Commercial, Plant and Traffic,—and brought about many changes



in personnel. F. G. Daboll, who had been Division Superintendent in charge of all functions of the Company's business, was now appointed Division Commercial Superintendent. R. H. Keller and F. P. Valentine were named Division Plant and Traffic Superintendents, respectively. The Springfield District heads were L. B. Stowe, Commercial Manager; A. McAuley, Plant Chief; and R. O. Nickerson, Traffic Chief. Additional appointments were Melville Hutchins, Plant Division Foreman; H. L. Jones, Construction Engineer; F. R. White, Springfield Chief Operator; H. L. Sanborn, Manager, Springfield Exchange and Chief Clerk to the District Manager in place of W. H. French, who was transferred to Plant, as District Foreman.

Edward M. Stannard, Chief Operator at Springfield since 1907, was transferred to Bangor, Me. as District Traffic Chief in July, 1908. At the farewell party, a few remarks were made by Miss Loretta Kennedy, local Chief Supervisor, expressing the best wishes of his many friends, and presentation of gifts followed. Topics observed that Mr. Stannard has a splendid record of getting results, and a successful administration of the service in his new assignment may be forecasted for him.

Fred R. White followed E. M. Stannard as Chief Operator of the Springfield exchange. Mr. White, according to Topics, entered the telephone business on May 2, 1902, as a night operator at Boston for the American Telephone Co. He was there five years, during the latter part as chief clerk for Roland Clough.

On May 1, 1907, he was transferred to the New England Co., and went to Lowell as Chief Operator. In July, 1908, he was given his present assignment.

Miss Ida Cross was appointed the first District Clerk of the Traffic Dept. Aug. 29, 1908, under R. O. Nickerson. She went to work March 1, 1900, as an Operator in the Springfield exchange and after serving as a Toll Operator, was promoted to Toll Supervisor Sept. 3, 1905.

Dec., 1908, Topics—The first regular meeting of the Springfield Chapter of the Telephone Employees Association was held at Graves Hall on Wednesday evening, December 2nd. T. H. Nicholson of Boston delivered a lecture on Types of

Switchboards and Associated Circuits, which was very instructive and was listened to with the closest of attention. After the lecture a short business meeting was held, and Messrs. Denver, Jones, Shaw and Bliss rendered several instrumental selections. A curious telephone instrument, gotten out by W. J. and Henry Denver back in the "dark ages," was exhibited and caused considerable comment and discussion. Permanent officers are: President, Charles W. Lemont; Vice-President, R. O. Nickerson; Secretary and Treasurer, Wm. H. French. Entertainment Committee, L. B. Stowe, Ralph Denver, A. C. F. Carter. 45 out of the 57 men present joined the society.

W. E. Bevins, formerly Chief Operator at South Framingham, was transferred to the Traffic Dept. at Springfield.

S. W. Baldwin, Manager at Bellows Falls, resigned in January, 1909, to accept a position as Chief Clerk to the District Plant Chief at Springfield. He will be succeeded by H. W. Buzzell, formerly Chief Operator at Laconia, N.H.

"Tommy," asked the visitor, "what are you going to be when you grow up to be a man?"

"I'm going to be an Arctic explorer," responded the bright little boy, "and now will you give me a quarter?"

"Gracious. Tommy, what do you want with a quarter?"

"I want to get five ice-cream sodas and find out how much cold I can stand."—Topics.

The work of transferring the subscribers' accounts from the exchanges of Dalton, Great Barrington, Lee, Northampton, Pittsfield and Stockbridge to the Springfield Accounting office was completed Feb. 24, 1909, which afforded satisfaction to the managers of these exchanges.

Miss Loretta Kennedy, of the Springfield exchange, was promoted from the position of Assistant Chief Operator to that of Chief Operator in February, 1909. This advancement placed Miss Kennedy in charge of one of the largest exchanges in the Company's territory.

Miss Beatrice F. Barnard was advanced from the position of Supervisor to that of Assistant Chief Operator.

Homer Harris, on March 1st, took up his pen to become the official Draftsman of the Division Plant Engineers.

May, 1909, Topics—Charles E. Davis has been appointed Chief Clerk to District Plant Chief McAulay of Springfield, in place of S. W. Baldwin.

L. V. Gillis, formerly Manager at Southbridge, was transferred to the position of Chief Clerk in the Division Plant Superintendent's office at Springfield in July, 1909. Libius started as a Groundman at Ipswich in 1901. He was transferred from Foreman of Maintenance at Salem to Manager at Southbridge in November, 1906.

Aug., 1909, Topics—Mrs. Mary C. Shannon, who has been in the Auditing office at Springfield for five years, lately as Assistant Chief Clerk, has accepted a position as Chief Clerk in the local operating room.

District Cashier Carter of Springfield had a Wales adding machine of the latest type installed in his office,—the beginning of mechanization,—which need was illustrated by a story in Topics:

New Steno: "I've added up these columns ten times, sir."

Boss: "Good for you."

Steno: "And here are the ten answers."

Rufus E. Davis arrived in Springfield Halloween night, 1909. He started to work in 1902 as a night operator in Franklin, N.H. for the Citizens Independent Telephone Co. When he completed school, they gave him a job as Installer, Repairman, and whatever they happened to need. March 16, 1905, he was hired by Charles L. Stone, of the New England Company, and joined an Installers' floating gang, working in Eastern Mass. and New Hampshire.

About 1924, according to "Rufe," the Company bought six bicycles, and he propelled one as far out as Forest Park and the North end, carrying coils of wire on the handlebar, tools in the rear; and sometimes he even balanced a ladder, borrowed from somebody near his work. The firemen used to tie one end of a long wire to his bicycle and the other end to a post or tree, and go into 'stitches' at the sight of his abrupt stop and flying materials.

Raymond O. Nickerson, who had been appointed District Traffic Chief Aug. 1, 1908, in connection with the Re-

organization, resigned his position to go into business for himself. At one time he was Toll Inspector for the whole New England territory. He had been in the employ of the Company fifteen years.

Oct., 1909, Topics—The many friends of H. P. Chapman were pleased to learn of his promotion and transfer from the Lewiston District to the District Traffic Chief's position in the Springfield District. Mr. Chapman was very popular in Maine.

Freeman K. Ostrander, Jr. started in the Commercial Dept. Nov. 16, 1909, holding two positions, besides attending High School. From 1 to 4 P.M. he was office boy for District Manager Stowe and Manager Sanborn, and from 5 to 9 he attended a row of pay stations in the Bridge Street Building. There was a small switchboard there, and the young apprentice plugged a cord in a jack connecting him with the toll board, placed the call, plugged the other cord in a jack connecting with a booth and collected the money from the pleased customer.

In November, 1909, Walter W. Farrington was appointed an Installer in Springfield. "Hap" began his career as a Night Operator in 1905, when attending High School at Livermore Falls, Maine. This exchange belonged to the Maine Telephone & Telegraph Co., and upon graduation, they advanced him to combinationman,—installing, repairing and incidentals. In 1907 Walter went to South Framingham to work with a floating gang that was installing common battery offices in place of magneto,—Greenfield being one. Walter said that these floating gangs were broken up after the three depts. were organized in 1908. He was given a chance to come to Springfield, after enjoying a vacation down East.

Dec., 1909, Topics—The foresight and wise judgment of the Company's officials is again proved by the manner in which the district and local managers have entered into their new duties in the solicitation of directory advertising. The work under the new plan was begun November 15th. The Springfield District was the first to undertake the work and a good showing was made up to the time of Mr. Stowe's recent illness. The hearty co-operation that the Advertising Department has met with in this work is extremely gratifying.

Jan., 1910, Topics—Prior to Jan. 1, 1910, the financing of

the Revenue Accounting Dept. was done by the Commercial Dept. On this date funds were advanced to R. P. Jones, Chief Clerk, Revenue Accounting, and all the revenue accounting offices hereafter are to make requisition on him for funds needed.

Service Inspector William A. Stoddard has been assigned to the work of Private Branch Exchange Inspector in the Western Division. Mr. Stoddard has met with success at the start, the subscribers welcoming the supervising that he is able to give. Benefits are sure to result both from the standpoint of the subscriber and the Company.

Horace E. Roby, formerly relief night Chief Operator in the Boston Division, and until recently night Chief Operator in Springfield, was appointed Chief Clerk in the Springfield exchange in March, 1910.

Miss Inez E. Kelly joined the Company on March 7, 1910, as an Operator in the Springfield exchange.

Miss Gertrude A. Rogers had been made night Chief Operator in the Springfield exchange, succeeding Horace E. Roby.

The following changes in the Western Division Traffic became effective April 18, 1910: Ralph W. Plummer, Supervisor of Traffic, to District Traffic Chief at Lewiston; Fred R. White, Chief Clerk, to Supervisor of Traffic; Wesley E. Bevins, Service Inspector, appointed Chief Clerk.

The June, 1910, Topics reported that the Chicopee exchange was cut over to a common battery system. A four-position No. 10 board replaced the old magneto board. The cut-over was unique in that the new board was placed in commission at 4:30 in the afternoon instead of late at night.

Homer J. Hebert came to Springfield in June, 1910, as Foreman of Central Office Equipment. "Beau" started with the Company at Worcester, June, 1906, installing central office equipment, and his boss, W. T. Durfee, wishing him to get some experience installing telephones, sent him up to Maine and Vermont,—in the dead of winter.

Nov., 1910, Topics—Miss Lena E. Blush has been appointed branch exchange supervisor in the Springfield District. It will be her duty to visit private branch exchanges,

of the operating force. consisting of their locker room, rest room, hospital room and their kitchen and lunch room.

“The top floor will contain the toll operating room, the toll test-board, and on the front the offices of the Plant dept. The offices of the District Manager, Manager and Cashier are still at the old location on Bridge Street. Suitable notice of change in quarters will be issued by the Company when such change occurs.”

Frank C. Buck was made District Wire Chief at the time of the new building.

The formation of the Telephone and Telegraph Society of New England was completed in April, 1911, by the merger of the Class A section of the Telephone Employees' Association and the Telephone Society of New England. The new Springfield Chapter Directory for 1911–1912 was as follows: President. W. E. Hodge; Vice-President, W. E. Bevins; Secretary, Fred R. White; Treasurer, F. C. Buck.

Papers and Meetings Committee: Libius V. Gillis, Chairman; John H. Armstrong, John W. Forssen, George W. Hayden, Alexander Proctor.

Educational Committee: Horatio G. Brown, William F. Fribbs, Eugene P. Lowell.

Membership Committee: Henry P. Chapman, Chairman; Daniel W. Baird, Patrick J. Begley, Harry S. Bills, Daniel J. Connors, Willis B. Fay, Harry A. Fowler, Charles B. Kelley, Curtis L. Lynch, Harry E. Oakes, Nelson C. Pardee, Harry S. Sanborn.

The Knox brothers, Charles H. and Claude L., entered the telephone business about the same time. Harry started in the Springfield Commercial office in July, 1911, canvassing for regrades; while Claude chose to be a draftsman in the Division Engineers, Jan. 1, 1912, but soon changed to a Field Engineer.

Mrs. Anna E. Wilbur came to work for the Company in October, 1911, reporting at the Revenue Accounting Dept.

HER FATHER: “I hope you appreciate that in marrying my daughter you are getting a very big-hearted and generous girl.”

YOUNG MAN: “I do, sir. And I hope that she has acquired those fine qualities from her father.”

The Jan., 1912, Topics reported that Miss Rose A. Carlin was promoted from Senior Operator to Local Supervisor in the Springfield exchange.

Mary A. Nelligan, formerly District Cashier of the Pittsfield District, has taken a position as Division Cashier, Plant Dept., Springfield, Mrs. Mary E. Nugent taking the Pittsfield position.

Donald H. Sawtelle was transferred from Vermont to Springfield April 1, 1912, as Line Assigner, reporting to Seabury R. Colby, Head Line Assigner. "Don" started with the Company in Brattleboro, as a Clerk in the Wire Chief's office on May 30, 1911, and was given a holiday that Monday. As a clerk he performed the duties of testman, line assigner, and whatever else was needed. Line assigning then was done by scrutinizing a set of cable cards.

Frank McInnis, Construction Engineer of the Springfield District, resigned April 1, 1912, to enter the real estate business in Springfield. He has been in the service of the Company for about twenty years and leaves many friends and associates who wish him success in his new venture. His position will be filled by L. V. Gillis, formerly Chief Clerk for R. H. Keller, Division Supt. of Plant, and Mr. Gillis' vacancy will be filled by Percy Cobb, Division XA Clerk, whose position will be taken by Ernest M. Batchelder of Boston.

The Springfield Commercial force, in May, 1912, consisted of the following persons, according to a historical notation by Etta L. Jones,—who joined the department early that year: Frank G. Daboll, Division Manager; Harry R. Painter, Chief Clerk; Mollie Morrissey (later Bradley), Stenographer; Lovell B. Stowe, District Manager; Helen Roberts (later Larkin), Stenographer; Harrison L. Sanborn, Manager; Etta T. Rice, Cashier; Eleanor F. Healey, Assistant Cashier; Beatrice Marshall and Miss De Montigny, Cashier's office; Henry Denver, Contract Agent; William Shaw, Contract Agent; Albert C. Starr, Directory; Mrs. Clara E. Pepper, Service Order Clerk; Nellie C. Hurley, Service Order Checker; Etta L. Jones, Service Order Writer; Charles H. Denver, Collector.

Jan., 1913, Topics—William J. Denver, who was retired from the position of Assistant General Manager on Dec. 1,

1912, died in Florence, Mass., on January 18. The burial took place in Springfield.

Mr. Denver's connection with the telephone business began in August, 1877, when he was appointed Agent of the Bell Telephone Co. in the Hampden and Hampshire Counties. In January, 1879, as Agent of the Western Union Telegraph Co., he established the first telephone exchange in Springfield.

On Aug. 1, 1885, he became Assistant General Manager of the New England Telephone Co., and for 27 years, as an officer of the Company, his life was bound up in its welfare.

Part of a resolution from the Board of Directors to his family follows: "During his service upon this board, Mr. Denver did not fail to win our respect, our confidence and our warm regard. We desire by this record to express our appreciation of his high character, his rare kindness and his long and devoted service to the Company."

Miss Loretta L. Kennedy, Chief Operator at Springfield, was transferred to the Division pay roll about Jan. 1, 1913, to make special studies pertaining to the training of students and supervisors.

Miss Teresa M. Corridon succeeded Miss Kennedy as Springfield Chief Operator.

Miss Edith H. Harkness, Holyoke Chief Operator, was appointed Springfield Toll Chief Operator in February, 1913, to take the place of Mrs. Daisy C. Tryon, resigned.

Charles W. McCoy resigned in August, 1913, to go with the Traffic Engineer in the Providence Telephone Co.

Nov., 1913, Topics—The brand new two-million dollar Municipal Group at Springfield, the auditorium seating four thousand, was filled on the evening of Nov. 18, 1913, when Thomas A. Watson delivered his address on the "Birth and Babyhood of the Telephone," before the Springfield Chapter of the Telephone and Telegraph Society of New England. Mr. Watson was introduced by Springfield's Mayor, John A. Denison. The large gathering, among whom were Mayor Rivers of Chicopee, Mayor White of Holyoke, Superintendent of Schools J. H. Van Sickle, Vice-President H. S. Hyde of this Company, and numerous members of the city governments of Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee and surrounding towns, to-



gether with pupils and teachers, as well as a large majority of the business men—evinced every indication of their appreciation of Mr. Watson's talk.

A new telephone building, which was to provide more commodious quarters for the stock room, in charge of Storekeeper Hansen, and a well equipped garage, with housing capacity for all the district and division cars, was completed in December, 1913. The second floor will be arranged for district foremen's offices, and tool rooms, etc., for installers and construction men. (This stock room was at 114 Liberty Street, between Dwight and Chestnut, just west of the present Crucible Steel Co's. building.)

Dec., 1913, Topics—The first annual masquerade party given by the Springfield Chapter was held in Apollo Hall, December 3. The occasion was graced by the attendance of three officials of the Company, R. H. Keller, Division Plant Supt., F. G. Daboll, Division Commercial Supt., and G. A. Hayden, Division Traffic Supt. Prizes were won by Miss Lillian B. Crosby of Westfield, best woman's costume, Puritan; Miss Elizabeth Carlin, funniest woman's costume, Irish washerwoman; Frank Rogers, best man's costume, German prince; R. A. Palmer, funniest man's costume, clown. The following committee had charge: F. R. White, Chairman; C. E. Lyons, J. H. Armstrong, H. S. Bills, H. L. Jones, H. E. Oakes, Miss Anna Westphalen, Miss Mae Milbier, Miss Nellie Dunn.

Donald H. Sawtelle was transferred Oct. 5, 1914, from Head Line Assigner to the Division Engineers office as Chief Clerk. Harry Jones was the Division Engineer.

At a meeting held April 20, 1915, the Springfield Rifle Club was organized and the following officers elected: President, A. S. Page; Vice-President, W. N. Messenger; Secretary, F. K. Ostrander; Treasurer, D. H. Sawtelle; Executive Officer, C. H. Knox.

Allen C. Fitch, in 1915, was made Assistant Division Traffic Engineer in Springfield. He started as a Night Operator in North Adams in 1901, and in two years became Chief Operator. He went to Springfield in 1908 as Service Inspector and in 1911 was made Assistant Traffic Chief.

A field day at Pratt Field, July 17, 1915, was held by the

Western section of the Telephone and Telegraph Society, which was attended by 1400 employees, their families and friends. The Henry S. Hyde baseball cup was a great stimulant to the members of the baseball team but the classic was won by the Worcester team. The girls' baseball game was won by Pittsfield. George Pelton was first in the men's singles tennis, and Loretta Kennedy won the women's singles tennis match.

George H. Hicks entered the plant dept. in September, 1915, as a helper to Fred Beebe. Mr. Beebe was a House Cable Installer, doing prewiring in apartment blocks. When George got a little older—he was only sixteen when he started—he was given a position installing telephones.

March, 1916, Topics—Harry W. Dickinson, Supervisor of Motor Vehicles in the Western Division, is leading the special class in automobile instruction at Springfield. Harry entered the employ of the Company Dec. 1, 1905, as an Instrument Installer at Worcester, and in two years became a General Inspector. Later he was utilized as a mechanic and driver, when motive equipment came into use. On Sept. 28, 1915, he was transferred to Springfield in connection with trucks, cars and power tools.

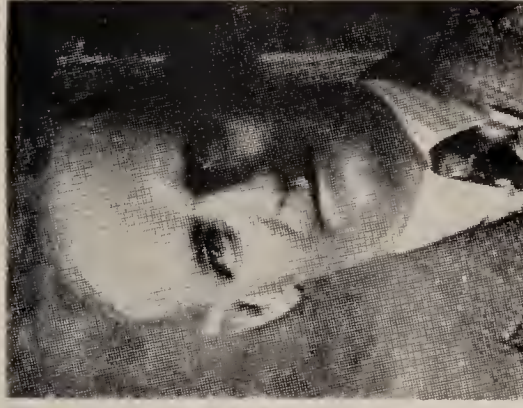
In April, 1916, Walter W. Farrington was appointed Wire Chief of the Westfield Exchange Area. "Hap" supervised the installation of the common battery board at Amherst, and has been a substation Inspector and local Testman of the River Exchange since coming to Springfield.

Sept., 1916, Topics—River, Walnut and Orchard Units.

With the delivery of the next telephone directory, the Springfield exchange will be split into three central office units which will be named River, Walnut and Orchard. There are 14,000 subscribers and 21,000 telephones connected to the Springfield switchboard, with 200 subscribers and 260 telephones connected with Indian Orchard, a total of 14,200 subscribers and 21,260 telephones in the city. Subscribers, now listed under the heading "Indian Orchard," will be listed under Springfield heading with the central office name Orchard prefixing the number. Orchard numbers will not be changed. About 18,000 telephones will be connected with the new River central office and about 3,000 with the Walnut



H. WILLIS EMERSON



PHILIP N. DINSMORE



HAROLD B. RANSEHOUSE



HARRY E. OAKES



CARL A. HILAND



FRANK J. HEALY



EDWARD M. STANNARD





THE SPRINGFIELD 'COMPANY BASEBALL LEAGUE' TEAM—1915

*Sitting, left to right: Goldie Bowler, Babe Steere, George Downs, Jimmy Gross, Bill Messenger. Standing: Carl Butler, John Bunyan, Manager Jim Hickey, Ike Steere, Charlie Davis, Hap Farrington, Jack Burnham.*



switchboard. Sometime ago the Telephone Company purchased the Springfield News property at the corner of Worthington and Dwight Streets, and the work of tearing down the building is now going on. Eventually the Walnut switchboard will be placed in the new addition. When the addition to the present switchboard is completed there will be room for 98 local operators and 8 information operators to work at one time, handling over 125,000 calls of all kinds every day.

Jan., 1917, Topics—Margaret D. McCarthy, Supervisor of rest quarters in the Springfield exchange, was appointed local Chief Operator to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Edna L. Shurtleff, recently married. Miss Shurtleff has been in the Springfield exchange since March, 1913. Miss McCarthy entered the service in July, 1907, and since that time has steadily forged ahead. Her popularity has never waned and her ever-ready smile and pleasing disposition have always won countless friends.

The first teletypewriter to be installed in Springfield was at the Springfield *Union*, the latter part of 1916 or early 1917. It connected this newspaper to the Associated Press service in New York, and was installed by Eugene P. Lowell, District Central Office Man, who had attended a class of instruction given by the American Telephone Co. The Bell Telephone Laboratories, according to Gene, was forced to release the instrument sooner than planned, probably on account of the war, so that some changes confronted him in setting it up. It was a cumbersome affair and noisy, but could send 40 words per minute. Gene looked after "Old Iron Horse" about a year, before being promoted to Central Office Foreman.

Bernard A. Digan and Vertran F. Jones, repairmen, had worked some on the teletypewriter, and were delegated to look after its welfare.

The first mention of teletypewriter service noticed in Topics was in Mr. Vail's letter of Dec. 11, 1918, announcing the American Telephone Company's invention of the multiplex transmission of messages,—“as applied to high speed printer systems we can do eight times as much as is now done.”

Jan., 1917, Topics—New 5 Story Building to be Erected.

The addition to the Springfield central office building will be 80 feet in height with five stories. It will have a frontage of 107 feet on Worthington Street and 87 feet on Dwight Street, and will be built in such a way that sometime in the future three more stories may be added. The building will be constructed of steel, brick and concrete, and will be as fireproof as modern skill can make it. The exterior will be of brick with marble trimmings.

The new building will contain the permanent Walnut exchange switchboard, and practically all the power and terminal room equipment. The River switchboard and the toll switchboard will remain in the present building. Provision also will be made for the division and district plant dept. forces and the clerks of the division revenue supervisors, which now occupy leased quarters.

The first floor will be occupied almost entirely by the commercial dept., the second floor by the offices of Division Supt. of Plant Keller and District Plant Chief McAulay, the third floor by the power and terminal plant, the fourth floor by the Walnut exchange operating room, and on the fifth floor will be the sitting room and lunch room for the use of operators. It is expected the building will be ready for complete occupancy on August 1 of next year.

The Topics of August, 1917, announced that R. H. Keller, Division Plant Supt., having entered military service, H. L. Jones was appointed acting Division Plant Supt.

Nov., 1917, Topics—Lovell B. Stowe Leaves Western.

Section 1, Sheet 4 of the Contract Practices says so and so. Now did you ever stop to think what a big job it is to get these out so that they are understandable to the employees?

Well, that is the job that "L. B." is doing today, making routines for us all to follow to get the best results and he is doing a good job. Commercial Engineer Munroe decided that he wanted a man of Mr. Stowe's type on his staff, so along he came to Boston where he now holds a job that would cause the average man to get gray haired over night. One thing that impresses everyone about Mr. Stowe is his good nature. He always has a smile that is contagious.



Miss Theresa Tierney was honored by being made Chief Operator of the Camp Devens exchange, and Miss May L. Purves was made a Supervisor.

On July 22, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson placed the telegraph and the telephone under the Postmaster General, the property to be returned in an operating condition equivalent to that which existed on July 31, 1918.

Oct., 1918, Topics—Northrup Succeeds Daboll.

Frank G. Daboll, Commercial Supt. of the Western Division, and for substantially forty years identified with telephony in that division, has notified General Supt. Whitney of his desire to retire from active service on account of the condition of his eyes.

The Western Division will certainly miss the old "Super," as he was affectionately called. A nervous, brusque man, his discipline was strict, but no one ever questioned his justness, and everyone conceded the presence of a big and generous heart. Mr. Daboll's motto for the successful conduct of the telephone business is brief but comprehensive: Give Good Service.

His successor is William B. Northrup, North Suburban Manager, who has been a telephone man for nearly 21 years. He entered the employ of the Company Dec. 26, 1897, as a clerk in the Auditor's office, and was subsequently voucher clerk in the Boston Division office, Division Chief Clerk and Cashier at New Bedford, Chief Clerk at Lowell, Boston and Worcester, Commercial Chief Clerk of the Central division, Special Agent in the General Commercial Superintendent's office, and in charge of methods, efficiency, organization and employees' training work in the Commercial Engineering office.

Raymond Daboll was appointed District Plant Engineer at about the time of his father's retirement. He entered the employ of the Company Jan. 7, 1909, in the Engineering department and had become Field Engineer before receiving this appointment.

Warner E. Eldridge was appointed a coin box collector Oct. 14, 1918. Warner started to work May 5, 1905, as a relief op-

erator in the Needham, Newton and Wellesley exchanges at the age of sixteen, and soon was made a full-fledged night operator at Needham. He transferred to the Traffic Dept. in Springfield in 1910 as a service observer and in 1913 became a Clerk in the Wire Chiefs' office, where he remained until his recent appointment.

Nov., 1918, Topics—Charles N. Tasker, who has been acting Division Plant Supt. in the State of Maine division since January of this year, has been promoted to Division Plant Supt. of the Western division.

He first entered the telephone service as Night Operator at Dover, N. H., where he was born. In 1898 he started in the Plant Dept. as an Installer and worked up to Division Inspector in 1905, serving in New Hampshire, Central Division and New Bedford. He was then engaged for a year by the Mexican Telephone and Telegraph Co. as Assistant General Manager at Mexico City. Returning to New Bedford in 1906, he was soon advanced to Division Foreman. In August, 1908, the position of District Plant Chief was established for the New Bedford district, to which he was appointed and conducted successfully until January, 1918, when he received his assignment as Division Plant Supt. for the State of Maine.

Frank W. Spencer, who has been the Division Revenue Supervisor at Springfield for several years, was transferred to the staff of the Traveling Auditor, in August, 1918. His territory was expected to be Western Mass. and Vt., so that he could continue to live in Springfield.

Philip N. Dinsmore, Division Revenue Supervisor at Bangor, was transferred to Springfield August, 1918, in a similar capacity.

MR. DUBBS (with newspaper): "It tells here, my dear, how a progressive Boston woman makes her social calls by telephone."

MRS. DUBBS: "Progressive. Huh! She's probably like me, not a decent thing to wear."

Sept., 1919, Topics—Walnut Cut-Over in New Building.

Times have changed somewhat, and we make less of cut-overs than in former days. Like other features of our business

they have been systematized and perfected so that a successful "cut" in each instance, is now positively assured.

The cut-over of the Walnut exchange at Springfield, Saturday, July 26, attracted a small group of people and the subscribers were transferred to the new board without a hitch in the proceedings.

The new exchange starts with 17 local and 8 switching positions. There are approximately 5,000 Walnut subscribers coming into the exchange, or 2,200 lines. The new switchboard has a capacity of about 9,000 lines, or about 20,000 subscribers. The initial installation is 4,000 lines, which will care for about 7,500 subscribers. A new type of ringing key has been installed, which is much more positive in its action and cannot stick, and a new type of timing device, much after the pattern of a mileage registering device on a speedometer. There is a dial at each position, which registers the time of day in minutes and tenths of minutes.

Up to the time of the cut-over, Walnut has been more or less of an adjunct of the River exchange. Both exchanges have occupied the same quarters in the old building and the two have been handled by one force organization. Now, however, Walnut comes into its own in brand new quarters and with a distinct and separate force organization.

At the head of the new organization is Miss Theresa Tierney, who has been promoted to the Chief Operatorship of so important an office in recognition of the splendid service rendered as Chief Operator of the Camp Devens Exchange. Miss Tierney handled many critical situations at Camp Devens with skill and diplomacy, and won both the admiration and co-operation of the army officers stationed there. Miss Tierney will have as her assistant Miss Frances O'Brien, who will act in the capacity of Desk Supervisor. The Supervisors chosen are: Miss Gladys Newell, Miss Gladys Buckleton, Miss Helen O'Connell, Miss Mary Fagan, Miss Mary Donovan and Miss Leonora Lawler.

Dec., 1919, Topics—Duncan MacLennan has been transferred to Springfield as Division Plant Foreman. The promotion is in recognition of his work since he has been in Worcester. Mr. MacLennan has been employed by the Company for

twenty-eight years, thirteen of which have been at the Worcester office.

E. G. Breslin, who has been in the Plant dept. at Springfield for a number of years, took the place made vacant at Worcester.

## CHAPTER 27

### *Springfield Exchange Area*

*1920-1929*

FEB., 1920, Topics—Harry L. Sanborn, Manager of the Springfield Exchange, has been appointed District Manager, taking the new position Jan. 1, 1920. He will continue as Manager until his successor is appointed.

Mr. Sanborn has been Manager at Springfield since the Reorganization twelve years ago (Aug. 1, 1908), and has seen the stations grow from 9,000 in 1908, to more than 26,000 at the present time, which necessitated the division of the local exchange into three exchanges,—River, Walnut, and Orchard.

Much of the success of Harry Sanborn is due to the fact that he has always tried to give a “square” deal to the Company and to the subscriber.

Feb., 1920, Topics—Santa visits P. D. Dinsmore and his Force.

The conference room on the fifth floor of the new Telephone Building in Springfield was the scene of a very pretty Christmas party of the clerks of the Revenue Accounting Dept. on Monday evening, Dec. 22, 1919.

The entertainment committee provided some exciting and joyful games, everybody present taking part, and later, with Miss Mary C. Anthony at the piano as accompanist, the Misses Josie M. Meaney and Gladys M. Ludden entertained with vocal selections. Miss Dorothy Cameron danced and sang, and

Master Philip D. Dinsmore played a few selections on the piano which was greatly enjoyed.

Harold Giles took the part of Santa Claus, and distributed the presents according to the numbers on the packages, all present having drawn a number previous to the distribution. The packages also bore the names of many famous moving picture actresses, and much enjoyment was had through this novel way of distribution.

Singing and dancing were enjoyed and at 11 P.M. the "eats" drew everybody's attention.

The Decorating and Refreshment Committee was: Misses Grace Darling, Sallie Darling, Winifred H. Harris, and Mrs. Linda M. Cameron. Entertainment Committee: Misses Emma S. Hoyle, Ruth Beebe, and Irene A. Dowling.

April, 1920, Topics—Every division in the Company's territory will hereafter have its own Associate Editor of Telephone Topics, chosen by the functional heads in the respective divisions. Frederic R. White, Supervisor of Service, was selected by the three Division Supts. to be Associate Editor for the Western Division. He is well known in the Division and will be on the job to fill the pages allotted to him.

C. E. Davis was transferred to the position of Division Foreman of Central Office work under J. W. Forssen in 1920. After serving as Chief Clerk to District Plant Chief McAulay in 1909 and 1910, he took over Central Office, PBX and block wiring supervision in June, 1910, for the Springfield District.

John H. Armstrong was assigned to the Division Plant Engineers in 1920. He entered the service in the Central Office Construction Dept. at Boston in 1903. He came to Springfield in 1909, and was made Wire Chief at Springfield in 1911.

June, 1920, Topics—John W. Spalding, formerly Manager at Fall River, was appointed Manager of the Springfield Exchange and its subsidiary exchanges, May 3. He will have charge of the commercial interests of the Springfield, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Hampden, North Wilbraham and Ludlow exchanges. He is well qualified to care for what is considered one of the largest and rapidly expanding exchanges in the state, with more than 26,000 stations.

Mr. Spalding began his telephone career in 1904, in the me-

chanical dept. in Boston, and in two years transferred to the Traffic Dept. as a Service Inspector. A year later he became Chief Operator of the New Bedford exchange and in April, 1910, he was promoted to the Commercial Engineers in Boston, working with Charles F. West on toll development. He was appointed Manager at Taunton, Feb. 3, 1917, and at Fall River in June, 1918.

Aug., 1920, Topics—Telephone Topics lost its Associate Editor for the Western Division. Fred R. White, on July 6, left for his new position in the office of A. E. Walker, Supervisor of Traffic for the New York Telephone Co., where he will be engaged on special study work. Since coming to Springfield in 1908, he has served as Chief Operator, Chief Clerk to G. W. Hayden,—Division Traffic Supt., then Traffic Supervisor for the Division, Division Traffic Engineer, and Division Service Supervisor. Every one in the Western Division wishes him the best of luck in his new work.

Horace S. Holt was named Associate Editor of Telephone Topics for the Western Division to take Mr. White's place.

Dec., 1920, Topics—Ralph W. Plummer has been promoted to the position of Division Service Supervisor to fill the place of Fred R. White. Mr. Plummer entered the employ of the Company on Aug. 6, 1904, as a student in the Boston office. In April, 1906, he was appointed Chief Operator at Bangor. In Jan., 1907, he returned to Boston as Toll Service Supervisor, and in November, 1909, he first came to Springfield, as Supervisor of Traffic, remaining until April, 1910. He next served as District Traffic Chief at Lewiston, to Feb., 1914; at Bangor, to March 1, 1920; and at Fitchburg, to his present assignment.

Aug., 1920, Topics—Harry Oakes was coming down Belmont Ave. in his "little old last year's car" one morning recently on his way to work. A young lady who was walking along on the sidewalk, thinking it must be an electric car from the volume of noise, without looking around made a dash for a white post. In justice to Harry it must be admitted that he made good by offering to give the young lady a lift.

Nov., 1920, Topics—Maurice Blaisdell was tendered a surprise party by the employees of the Company in the Fitchburg

District in G.A.R. Hall, Fitchburg, on Sept. 21, and there presented with a handsome shot gun and a fishing rod.

Mr. Blaisdell was assigned to special work September 12, in the office of the Division Supt. of Plant, at Springfield.

Charles H. Knox, Cable inspector in the District Engineers, Springfield, was transferred to the District Construction Dept. in January, 1921. Harry's first assignment in 1911 to a flying squadron, which was canvassing for regrades, lasted about six months, and he next secured work in the District Construction Dept., making private property inventories and diagrams of toll plant. From here he went to the District Engineers Oct. 1, 1919, where he became an electrolysis Inspector. When this work was transferred to the District Construction Dept., Harry was needed to look after it.

Miss Elizabeth Harkness, for the past eight years Toll Chief Operator at Springfield, was promoted to a position in the office of the District Traffic Chief in January 1921. She has been regarded as a personal friend by each and every one of her girls.

Miss Mae I. Donovan was appointed Toll Chief Operator at Springfield in place of Miss Harkness. She began her career in December, 1905, as a Messenger girl. Through the position of Operator, Supervisor, Instructor, Night Chief Operator and Day Assistant Chief Operator, Miss Donovan has demonstrated her natural ability for telephone work.

The Northampton District was established Jan. 1, 1921, taking the Greenfield area from the Pittsfield District and the Northampton Area from the Springfield District. The Holyoke Exchange was added to the new District, probably in 1923. The Commercial Depts., however, were not affected. L. V. Gillis was made Plant Supervisor of this new District.

Charles E. Lyons, Installation Foreman at Springfield, was appointed Acting District Foreman of the Springfield District. He started as a Groundman in the Plant Dept. in April, 1903, at Springfield, where he has been ever since. He rose steadily through the positions of Lineman, Installer, Loop Team Foreman, Testman, Head Lineman, Head Installer and Installation Foreman.

Carlos N. Butler, Class A. Installer and Sub-foreman, suc-



ceeded Mr. Lyons. He started at Greenfield in July, 1903, as a member of a floating crew engaged in inside work, remaining there until July, 1906. He worked for the New York Company at New York for six months and then returned to Springfield in December, 1906, where he has been engaged in substation, PBX, and Central Office installations.

Carl A. Smith, Clerk to the Springfield District Foreman, was transferred to Northampton with his boss, Mr. Gillis. Carl started as a Night Operator in North Brookfield May 1, 1907, and was soon transferred to Worcester as Wire Chief's Clerk. He next worked in the Worcester and Springfield Accounting Depts.

Francis Carty took Carl's place in Springfield in January, 1921. He started his telephone career here June 27, 1913, as an Installer's Helper, prewiring blocks. He soon became an Installer, and in 1917 was transferred to the Construction Dept. In 1918 he went to France with the 301st Field Signal Battalion, 76th Division. Upon his return, he did installation and order board work until his recent promotion.

Frank G. Daboll, who had retired in 1918, died on March 3, 1921. His contribution to the establishment and growth of the telephone business in Western Mass. has been recorded in previous pages.

Telephone Topics, after a review of his telephone work, concluded with this paragraph: "Growing up with the art from times when a conversation of 20 miles was considered the extreme limit possible, he had at all times the greatest confidence in the future, and to his energy and progressive methods was due perhaps more than to any other one person, the rapid spread of farmer line installations in the rural sections of Western Massachusetts."

June, 1921, Topics—A New Form of Contest.

Fred Montessi, office boy, at Division headquarters in Springfield, was the winner of the Limerick Contest, and is in receipt of \$21 as prize money for having correctly guessed the subject of 21 of the 23 limericks. The following are the subjects of each limerick: Anna Cummings, W. J. McLaughlin, Harry Cook, H. W. Dickinson, Edith Harkness, Frederick Kegler, Gus McAulay, Clarence Hill, Irene Merrill, Jimmy

Malloy, Katherine Latchford, Lou Donlon, M. S. Blaisdell, "Skim" Bacon, F. K. Ostrander, Walter Pepper, E. J. Quinn, Herman Rouillard, Donald Sawtelle, Theresa Tierney, Cliff Vaughn, "Wally" Parker, "Zeke" Colby.

In 1921 Dean Ainsworth was transferred to the test board. He started with the Company in October, 1919, and worked a little while in a line crew, Charlie Biddle being the foreman. After trying his hand at telephone installing and central office repairing, he was appointed the first full time Teletypewriter Maintenance Man at Springfield.

George H. Campbell succeeded Dean Ainsworth as Teletypewriter Maintenance Man. George entered the Company in October, 1907, and his experience as Stock Room Clerk, and eight years in the installation and repair dept. will stand him in good stead. He spent two years with the 401st Telegraph Battalion in the First World War installing telephone and telegraph offices in France.

Oct., 1921, Topics—Operators Make Merry.

A "Dog" roast held Sept. 7th at Congamond Lake, was attended by Operators in the River, Walnut, Holyoke and Chicopee Exchanges. Upon arrival of the trucks, the fire was nice and hot, and in no time every one was enjoying the roasted "dogs" and marshmallows.

Then came the sports. The suitcase race was won by Mary Wynne. Mr. Amidon, Assistant Traffic Chief, was in the race also, and we are still wondering why he left the suit case after him. Next came the three-legged race, won by Rose Carlin and Teresa Sullivan of the River Exchange; 50 yard dash, won by Mae Connelly, River Exchange; second, Catherine Walsh, Walnut Exchange; pie plate race, won by Anna L. Sullivan of the River Exchange; one-legged race, won by Mr. Chapman. Mr. McAulay might have won but he used two legs instead of one.

The judges were Miss M. D. McCarthy, River Central Office, Mr. Knox and Mr. Boyce, of the Commercial Dept. After the sports, dancing was enjoyed until 11:30 p.m. Everybody had a dandy time, thanks to the committee in charge: Hazel Barry, Chairman; Julia Lacey, Mary Gordon, Mary Wynne,

Mae Connelly, Catherine Walsh, Catherine Comer, Anna E. Sullivan and Florence Mahoney.

In 1922 Seabury R. Colby was appointed the first Plant Engineer of the new Northampton District. He joined the Springfield Plant Dept. about 1905. After taking a hand at installing, and repairing for a few months, he became an Inspector. He then was assigned to the Testboard, which meant line assigning as well, and in 1911 was appointed Line Assigner. About 1919 he went into the District Engineers office.

A Kentucky gentleman was once offered a position with a company selling spring water. He was to be paid one hundred dollars per week and the representative of the company told him he had nothing to do but go into first-class cafes and order a glass of—spring water.

“But, sah, spose they’ve got it sah. No, sah, I will not take the job, sah!”—Topics.

Wayne D. Wood, Commercial Representative in Westfield, was transferred to the Springfield business office as Counter Representative in June, 1922. Wayne began his telephone career in Westfield April 5, 1909, as a Collector and later was the first rural line salesman in the Springfield District.

Aug., 1922, Topics—Western Mass. Credit Union.

Heretofore, Springfield has been a branch of the Telephone Workers’ Credit Union of Mass., with headquarters in Boston but because of its size, it has been deemed advisable to make it a separate Credit Union, owned, operated and managed by and for Telephone employees of the Western part of the State. This Credit Union will take in Pittsfield, Holyoke, No. Adams, Greenfield and other cities near Springfield.

At the annual meeting the following Directors were elected: P. F. Follett, W. M. Pepper, H. G. Rouillard, A. L. Dexter, Eleanor Healey, Clara Pepper, L. B. Shepherd, Anna Wilbur, C. F. Donahoe, Julia L. Finn, Catherine Canty, Teresa Lynch, Helen O’Donnell, Joseph Marr and E. S. Henderson.

The Supervisory Committee elected were: F. L. Beebe, Eva Bryson, E. T. Sheridan.

The Credit Committee elected were: E. A. Geoffrion, I. N. Kelley and E. J. Tyer. The Directors elected the following Officers: Joseph Marr, President; Mrs. Clara Pepper, E. S.

Henderson and L. B. Shepherd, Vice-Presidents; H. G. Rouillard, Treasurer, Helen O'Donnell, Clerk.

Mary T. O'Connell was transferred from Pittsfield to Springfield in 1922, when the Pittsfield Accounting office was moved to Springfield. After displaying her penmanship in bookkeeping a little while, she was promoted to Supervisor of Machine Billing and then to Supervisor of Reports.

Oct., 1922, Topics—Frank A. Jones, upon the resignation of Harry A. Noyes, Chief Clerk in the Vermont Plant Dept., on account of ill health, has been appointed to that position. Mr. Jones is a young man but has spent many years in the Accounting and Auditing Departments, where he has had valuable experience to prepare him for his new position. He first began his telephone career Sept. 1, 1908, working under R. P. Jones.

Clarence Hepburn, who came to work in 1910, was appointed to take Mr. Jones' place in Rutland in charge of accounting in the Plant Dept. for the State.

Charles N. Tasker, Division Supt. of Plant for the Western Division, was promoted to the position of General Supt. of Plant in November, 1922, which place was formerly held by George H. Dresser, before his assignment to the General Managership of the Company. Mr. Tasker has been head of the Plant Dept. in the Western Division since November, 1918.

Jan. 1923, Topics—Ralph C. Marden, the new Division Supt. of Plant, has been a telephone man for nearly 30 years and knows the business from the ground up. Since he began to work for the Telephone Co. as a Night Operator at Claremont, N.H., he has occupied a number of positions and always with credit to himself and to the Company. During these years he has been a Collector, Solicitor, Installer, Repairman, Lineman, Clerk, Cashier, Chief Clerk, District Supt., District Plant Chief and Division Supt. of Plant.

These positions were held in various places in N.H., Mass. and Vt. From Aug. 1, 1908, until his transfer to Springfield, he was in charge of the plant work in the state of N.H.

Division Engineer, Harry L. Jones, left the Western Division in Nov., 1922, to become Division Engineer for the Metropolitan Division. He was appraised by Topics as a real

man among men, loyal to them, working with and for them all the time.

Jan., 1923, Topics—Henry Denver died on December 5. He was born in Springfield and as a boy worked on a farm, in a newspaper office and as a telegraph operator. For years he was with the Western Union Telegraph Co., was in charge of the Associated Press wires and was Night Manager at Springfield for eight years. He became actively connected with the Springfield office of the New England Telephone Co. in 1895 and continued his duties until July 1, 1914.

March, 1923, Topics—Charles A. Weston, formerly Manager of the Manchester, N.H. exchange, has been promoted to the position of District Manager of the Springfield, Northampton and Pittsfield Districts. His telephone career dates back to July 1, 1900, when he began work as half-time Night Operator and Collector at Milford, Mass., and after six months he was transferred to N.H. as Inspector under C. L. Stone. Soon he returned to Milford, as Station Inspector.

Next he was Chief Operator at Fitchburg, then Manager at Rochester, N.H., and then transferred to Concord as Manager in 1907. On May 10, 1915, he was appointed Manager at Manchester. He is the originator of the New Hampshire Plan of Financial Supervision.

“Charlie” was of a musical turn, and was always ready to accompany on the piano at parties. An item in Topics, before he came to Springfield, will surprise many: “The rendition of ‘Moonbeams,’ a waltz song, and ‘Closer, closer, Sweetheart, I love you,’ a ballad, the two latest song hits by Manager Weston of the Manchester District, have been repeatedly encored when played in local theatres and ballrooms.”

Carl A. Hiland was transferred to the Western Division as Service Supervisor from Portland, where he was District Traffic Chief. Carl came with our Company as a Collector at Manchester, N.H., in 1905. In 1906 he joined the Traffic Dept. Ever since, he has been an efficient, capable Traffic man, filling many jobs in the Western, New Hampshire, and State of Maine divisions satisfactorily.

John W. Spalding was transferred to the State of R.I. Division to become Manager at Providence on May 1, 1923. Mr.

Spalding had been active in civic affairs during the three years of his Managership at Springfield.

H. A. Amidon, Assistant Traffic Chief of the Springfield District, spent six weeks in Philadelphia taking a course in toll management—from which experience, great improvements were expected.

Willis—The telephone broadens a person's acquaintance.

Gillis—You bet. There are people who come in to use ours that I never saw before.

Miss Margaret D. McCarthy, River Chief Operator, was assigned to the District Traffic Manager's office Sept. 9, 1923. She started her career as an Operator at Springfield July 8, 1907, and worked her way up to local Chief Operator of Springfield, being appointed to that position Sept. 25, 1916.

Her wide knowledge of operating conditions and practice recommended her for the important work of service matters and central office administration, which are involved in her new assignment.

Miss Edith H. Harkness, who succeeded Miss McCarthy as River Chief Operator, entered the employ of the Company as an Operator at Holyoke, Aug. 12, 1906. Just two years from this date she was appointed Chief Operator of the Holyoke office. Feb. 3, 1913, she was appointed Toll Chief Operator at Springfield. In Nov. 1920, she was transferred to the District Traffic Chief's office and on Jan. 1, 1923, to the staff of the Division Supt. of Traffic as Instructor in charge of training Central Office employees in the work of the so-called "140 Plan."

Miss Marguerite F. Parker, who was appointed Division Instructor, became an Operator Nov. 13, 1911, and afterwards was assigned to the Holyoke Exchange as a Central Office Instructor.

Sept. 20, 1923, Charles H. Pillsbury was transferred to the Northampton District Construction Dept., and April 21, 1924, became the District Foreman. He started with the Company in the Eastern Division Sept. 6, 1909, and was transferred to the Springfield Construction Dept. the next year. He was Right-of-Way Agent for about seven years prior to his Northampton appointment.



PERTAINING TO METHODS AND RESULTS—ABOUT 1924

*Left to right:* Lewis Pierce, General Engineers office; Frank Buck, Springfield Wire Chief; Arthur Caverly, Springfield District Plant Chief; Cleveland Morey, Pittsfield Wire Chief; Harold McCausland, Worcester Wire Chief; John Forsen, Division Supervisor of Plant Methods; Wallace Parker, Division Foreman.



A FLOATING GANG PICTURED IN FITCHBURG IN 1895

*At right, Foreman Eli Jourey. Next to him (not the boy) a man holds a cant hook. Next is Jack Loubey, wearing spurs.*





THE WESTERN DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS—1923

*Left to right:* William B. Northrup, Commercial; Ralph C. Marden, Plant; George W. Hayden, Traffic.



THE SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT HEADS—1923

*Left to right:* H. P. Hansen, Plant Chief Clerk; A. J. McAulay, Plant Chief; C. A. Weston, Manager; H. P. Chapman, Traffic Chief; L. Merton, now Mrs. R. H. Dunbar; Ida Cross.



PLANT ENGINEERS WIN IN SPRINGFIELD DEPARTMENTAL BOWLING—1925 TO 1926

*Standing, left to right: E. T. Sheriden, C. L. Knox, A. E. White. Seated: R. M. Hatheway, P. O. Cotti, Captain, A. J. Petronino.*

Oct., 1923, Topics—Plant Department in Action.

At 1:30 Saturday afternoon, Sept. 9, fire broke out on the old North End bridge over the Conn. River in Springfield. District Plant Chief McAulay was early at the scene—he knew the bridge was doomed. Two 300-pair cables serving 1100 West Springfield subscribers, and 9 open-wire toll circuits were destroyed.

Then our organization began to function. To Mr. McAulay's office came Wire Chief Buck and Division Engineer Holt. Immediately Mr. Holt began the study of restoration. He planned to drop new cables into the bottom of the river about 75 feet from the bridge on its down-stream side. The 9 toll circuits were to be run from a tree on the up-stream side of the bridge in one span to a tree on the west bank of the river. This span was about 1200 feet. Mr. Holt had finished about 3:30 P.M.

All the while District Plant Chief McAulay was marshalling forces of a fine organization—river boats, and scows were offered, right of way permission secured—cables and material were on the way. Work on the toll circuits made rapid progress and the 9 toll lines were connected at 2 o'clock Sunday morning, 11 hours after the fire had been discovered.

Conduit men immediately dug a trench from a man hole on the W. Springfield side down to the water's edge. Cable splicers were on both sides of the river and in the middle of the river, and the fine wires were spliced as soon as the cable ends reached the men. Altogether about 3,600 splices were made and this work was finished at 3 o'clock Monday morning, 38 hours after the burning of the bridge.

About 100 men were engaged in the work under the direction of Augustus McAulay, District Plant Chief; Frank E. Croken, arranged right of way permissions; Charles E. Lyons, District Foreman; Wallace Parker, Division Foreman; Michael H. Kenney, Conduit Foreman; Frank Buck, Wire Chief.

Oct., 1923, Topics—George A. Morley was appointed District Traffic Chief of the Springfield District, Sept. 1, 1923. He began his telephone career in June, 1911, with the New York Telephone Co. as a Traffic Inspector at Rochester. He filled various positions in Rochester and Bugalo and in June

of 1922 he was again promoted to a bigger field, being placed in charge of the Buffalo Eastern District, which position he continued to fill, up to his present assignment.

Henry P. Chapman, on Sept. 12, 1923, was transferred to Boston as Traffic Supt. of the South Suburban District. During his 14 years of service as District Traffic Chief of Springfield he won the esteem and respect of those with whom he worked. The Central Offices also presented him a variety of personal gifts which will ever remind him of his loyal associates who learned to know—

That he it was, who always found in certain sorts  
of ways,

The time to give a word of cheer on certain busy  
days.

When problems vexed and certain things required a  
helping hand,

He'd give the certain sympathy we mortals under-  
stand.

Catherine McQuade was promoted from Assistant Chief Operator of the River Exchange to Routine Chief Operator in Sept., 1923.

Oct., 1923, Topics—Edward J. Quinn, Division Toll Wire Chief of the Western Division, was appointed Plant Supervisor of the Northampton District on Sept. 4. He came into the telephone business 21 years ago as Night Wire Chief for the Southern New England Telephone Co., at New Haven. He was transferred to Boston as a Toll Tester in the Circuit Manager's office. In 1905 he became Toll Wire Chief at Worcester and in 1914 he was appointed Division Toll Wire Chief for the Western Division.

John B. Powers, who succeeded Mr. Quinn as Division Toll Wire Chief, was first employed in Nov., 1916, as a student in the Toll Test room at Springfield. In April, 1923, after serving over seas with Company A of the 101st Engineers, he was appointed Senior Toll Testman.

Raymond R. Snow succeeded Mr. Powers as Senior Toll Testman. He came to Springfield from Worcester, where he started in the business as a student in the Toll Test Dept.,

after which he successfully filled several jobs in the Plant Dept., the last being Toll Testman at Worcester.

Other Plant changes effective Sept. 4, 1923, were reported in Topics as follows:

The promotion of A. J. McAulay to Division Foreman of Construction.

Howard W. Ellis was appointed Division Supervisor of Supplies.

Maurice V. Fitzgerald became Division Supervisor of Methods.

Luke E. Dean, Division Examiner, was promoted to Wire Chief at Fitchburg.

Clyde T. Hubbard was transferred to the New England Telephone Co. in Sept., 1923, working for the District Plant Engineer at Springfield. Clyde started with the Bell Telephone Co. of Pa. in Philadelphia July, 1917, as a Student Engineer. After spending a few months there and in Harrisburg, he was assigned to the District Plant Engineers force at Reading as an Engineering Assistant, and in about a year and a half went to Scranton in the same capacity.

Howard W. Ellis, appointed Division Supervisor of Supplies Sept. 4, 1923, started to work for this Company Sept. 1, 1909, as a Stockman at Brockton, and after several assignments was transferred as Stockman to Pittsfield. Early in 1917 he was appointed District Storekeeper for the Pittsfield District.

Donald H. Sawtelle was transferred Oct. 27, 1923, to Athol as Wire Chief. "Don" had been on budget work in the Division Engineers since April, 1919, when he returned from service in the First World War.

Richard J. Dee was promoted to the position of Force Engineer in the Western Division in October, 1923. Mr. Dee entered the employ of the Company as a student in Boston, Sept. 1920. In Feb., 1921, he was transferred to Worcester as Assistant to Carl E. Parker, Worcester District Traffic Chief. He was there only a short time but was spoken of by Topics as "a good mixer and a rattling good traffic man." In Oct., 1922, he was moved to Providence, in the same capacity. "Dick" returned to Worcester in Jan., 1923, where he remained until his transfer to Springfield.

Maurice S. Blaisdell was elected President and Manager of the Western Mass. Telephone Workers Credit Union. Maurice joined the Company in Fitchburg, Feb. 1, 1899, and became Fitchburg District Plant Chief. He has been serving as Division Special Agent since Sept. 12, 1920.

Nov., 1923, Topics—Stuart R. Darnley is an Installer in the Springfield Area who has taken an active interest in First Aid and Accident Prevention. Recently he had an opportunity to demonstrate his knowledge of First Aid in a very effective manner.

An automobile crashed into the rear of a street car and a young lady received a broken leg in addition to other injuries. Darnley, who was standing near the scene of the accident, applied First Aid to the young woman and, at the same time, put in a call for a doctor and an ambulance. He applied a splint, which consisted of a policeman's "billy", doing the splint up with a belt and handkerchief. He had just finished this job when the doctor arrived. Darnley assisted the doctor in applying gauze bandages, and then arranged for the young woman to be taken to the hospital.

The thoroughness with which he applied the splint and the coolness he displayed in his work was the subject of much comment by those who witnessed the accident.

Robert W. Murdick entered the employ of the Company Dec. 31, 1923, and was assigned to the Springfield office as Commercial Representative.

Frank J. Healy was transferred to Springfield in the spring of 1924 to become the first Division Auditor of Receipts of the Springfield Accounting office. Mr. Healy started his Telephone career in Nov., 1906, in the Boston office as a book-keeper, where he spent four years. In 1910 he was transferred to Manchester, N.H., as District Auditor of Receipts, leaving Manchester one year later to serve in a similar capacity in Lowell.

Grace I. Mudge was attracted to the telephone business in May, 1924, in the Revenue Accounting office, which was in the Poli Building, 196 Worthington Street. Her first task was sorting toll tickets and the next one consisted of inscribing addressograph plates used in billing. Then came a position

which seemed to be to her liking,—classifying Service orders and making out reports. If anyone wanted to know how many telephones and lines there were in an exchange, a district or the division; or how many 2RS, PBXs, extensions; or how many connections and disconnections; etc.,—her reports would appraise one of the facts.

A report from Topics indicates the transfer of the Worcester Accounting Office to Springfield: A novelty dance was held at Melha Temple, on the evening of May 7, 1924, by Revenue Accounting Dept. girls in honor of the Worcester girls, who have recently joined the Springfield force. A large crowd attended and favors were distributed.

The guest of the evening was R. P. Jones, Auditor of Receipts, Boston. The committee in charge consisted of Miss Yvonne LeBlanc, chairman, and the Misses Mary Anthony, Evelyn Bourque and Nellie Leete.

William W. Denning was transferred from the Fitchburg District to Springfield in 1924, as an Installer of central office equipment. He entered the employ of the Company in 1905, later going with the New York Telephone and Western Electric Companies on central office construction and as an Inspector of central office equipment. In 1915 he came to the Fitchburg District as an Installer of central office equipment, his next move being to Springfield, where he was later appointed Division Supervisor of Central Office Power.

“What name are you calling?”

“McCohen,” the customer answered.

“I beg pardon?” asked the operator.

“McCohen.”

The wire was silent for a moment, then the girl said: “Wait a moment, please. I think the wires are crossed.”—Topics.

Miss Rose Carlin was appointed Chief Operator of the River Exchange in May, 1924. Miss Carlin entered the employ of the Company Jan. 3, 1910, and became Supervisor in less than a year. On June 4, 1917, she was appointed Assistant Chief Operator. Miss Carlin, according to Topics, is a conscientious and thorough worker, and well known throughout the Western Division.

June, 1924, Topics—Springfield on Two Unit Basis.

The Commercial office has been placed on a two-unit basis. The River unit cares for the needs of 20,000 subscribers in the River Exchange; the Walnut unit cares for 18,000 subscribers in Walnut, Orchard, Chicopee, Ludlow and East Longmeadow.

The unit managers are directly responsible for the operations of their respective divisions. The counter agents meet the public, chiefly with regard to new installations, regrades, change of locations, etc.

Wayne D. Wood, who has been acting as Office Manager, is appointed Manager of the River Unit.

E. Warner Eldridge is appointed Manager of the new Walnut Unit. He has served as Commercial Representative since January 10, 1921.

June, 1924, Topics—Voice Training.

Realizing the importance of the proper use of the voice in our work and to develop this to the fullest possible extent, a course of training in voice technique has been started in the Western Division. Increased accuracy and efficiency of operating through improved enunciation or clearness of speaking, greater ease of talking by operators through using their voices sparingly and quietly, so as to increase the resonance or carrying power. The first class consisting of the Chief Operators of the larger offices, under the direction of Miss Marguerite Parker, Division Supervising Instructor, was held in Springfield.

June, 1924, Topics—Springfield, Northampton and Pittsfield Districts have come into their own again. Edward ("Ted") J. Tyler has been appointed Associate Editor for Telephone Topics for these sections of the Western Division with "Ned" Coolidge taking care of the Worcester and Fitchburg Districts.

Robert G. Bleakney reported to the Students Training Program in Boston June 30, 1924, and the next day saw him on his way to Springfield. His training here was not of the class room variety, but called for the donning of overalls and helping in various kinds of plant work,—such as sitting in a manhole on Liberty Street helping George Campbell splice



a cable. Some traffic training in manual operation was also provided.

In the fall of 1924, "Bob" Bleakney returned to Springfield to work on the Mass. Inventory, with Harry Gallup and Lewis Pierce. This was a complete inventory to establish the value of the Company's outside plant, for the 1925 rate case. In early 1925, "Bob" was transferred to Maine to assist in the inventory there.

July, 1924, Topics—Changes in the Western Division Plant.

Recently Division Plant Supt. R. C. Marden announced the following promotions: John B. Powers, transferred to the office of Toll Line Engineer, Boston; William S. Mason, appointed Division Toll Wire Chief; M. V. Fitzgerald, transferred to the office of the General Supervisor of Supplies, Boston; John W. Forssen, appointed Division Supervisor of Methods; Homer J. Hebert, appointed Division Equipment Foreman; Howard W. Ellis, appointed Division Supervisor of Motor Vehicles in addition to Division Supervisor of Supplies; Charles E. Davis, appointed Division Equipment Engineer; Harry W. Muzzy, appointed Central Office Installation Foreman; Frank L. Buckley, appointed Assistant to Division Supervisor of Methods; E. E. Geoffrion, appointed District Chief Clerk, Fitchburg District.

Margaret E. Vail was transferred from Worcester to the Springfield Revenue Accounting office in 1924. She started her telephone career Feb. 28, 1909, and advanced through the various stages of the work to positions of responsibility. Her cheerfulness and spirit of co-operation have earned her a well deserved popularity with her associates.

W. B. Northrup, Division Commercial Supt., was transferred to Boston to take the newly created position of Supervisor of Methods for the Commercial Dept., in August, 1924.

C. W. Dufresne was transferred to the Western Division to take Mr. Northrup's place. Mr. Dufresne was Division Commercial Supt. of the State of Maine Division until his promotion.

C. A. Weston, Springfield District Manager, was transferred to the new position of Division Commercial Assistant for the Western Division, in Aug., 1924. Having had considerable

experience in budget work, covering revenues and expenses and in the estimating of line and station growth, together with Plant and Traffic experience, he is particularly well qualified to assume his new duties.

Sept., 1924, Topics—John H. Weinheimer was transferred from Central District Manager, Metropolitan Division, to District Manager, Springfield, including Springfield, Pittsfield and the Northampton areas. Mr. Weinheimer began work with this Company in December, 1908, in the Auditing Dept. and after filling various positions was transferred to the Commercial Dept. in the Metropolitan District as a Contract Agent. After two years he was transferred to the Division office as assistant to the Chief Clerk. In Aug., 1912, he was appointed Manager at Bar Harbor. Many positions followed—Chief Clerk to James H. Barry, Metropolitan Division Commercial Supt., South Suburban Office Manager; Chief Clerk to George W. Conway; Coin Box Manager, where he made several improvements; and Collection Manager of the Metropolitan Division Aug. 13, 1917. May 12, 1919, after serving for more than 10 months with the American Red Cross at Washington, he was appointed Chief Clerk to General Commercial Supt. Whitney.

George H. Downs was assigned to the Springfield test board in 1924. George started with the Company in 1911, repairing switchboard cords, and worked up to be Central Office Repairman.

Sept., 1924, Topics—Managers' Conference at Springfield.

At a Managers' Conference held at the Hotel Kimball, on Aug. 20th, a good-bye party to former Division Commercial Supt., W. B. Northrup, and a welcome to the new Division Supt., C. W. Dufresne, was held.

Those present included W. B. Northrup, C. W. Dufresne, H. E. Hughes, C. A. Weston, J. C. Fair, J. J. Barry, E. F. Sidley, W. D. Hearn, J. J. Lynch, W. R. Henderson, F. G. Kegler, Miss H. M. Leamy, H. W. Emerson, R. D. Fuller, J. F. Shaw, W. S. Knox, G. F. Cheney, H. B. Ranshousen, J. F. Enwright, R. H. Hoit, R. P. Wilbur and L. P. Lanthier of the Commercial Dept.; and Division Supt. of Plant R. C. Marden, District Plant Chiefs Breslin, Mixer and Caverly of the Plant Dept.; District Traffic Chiefs Morley, Holt and Ross

of the Traffic Dept.; Division Auditor of Receipts Healey and District Revenue Supervisor Dinsmore of the Accounting Dept., and last, but not least, W. H. Stedman, former Manager at North Adams. It was with regret that E. J. Quinn and L. V. Gillis and Division Supt. of Traffic G. W. Hayden were unable to attend the party.

Oct., 1924, Topics—On Oct. 1, 1924, the territory of our Company was divided into five divisions, instead of seven. Western Division,—former Western Mass. Division, with addition of the State of Vermont,—headquarters will be at Springfield. R. C. Marden will be Division Plant Supt. for the Western Division and C. L. Vaughn, Plant Supt. for the State of Vermont, reporting to Division Supt. Marden. B. T. Miller will be Division Supt. of Traffic with S. F. Parker as Supt. of Traffic for Vermont reporting to him. Mr. Miller was acting Supt. of Traffic in the Worcester District for nearly a year.

Nov., 1924, Topics—When the announcement was made that Arthur S. Caverly, District Plant Chief, Springfield District, would be transferred to Providence, the news was received with regret.

On the morning of Sept. 26, while the men were assembling at the new stockroom on Columbia Terrace for their daily duties, A. L. Dexter, President of Local No. 4, International Brotherhood of Telephone Workers, arranged to have Mr. Caverly present and at the same time presented him a complete set of Dr. Charles W. Elliot's Harvard Classics in behalf of the members of Local No. 4, I.B.T.W.

Nov., 1924, Topics—Wallace A. McCoy was recently appointed District Plant Chief of the Springfield District, succeeding A. S. Caverly and upon assuming his new duties was presented a beautiful basket of flowers by Local No. 4, I.B.T.W. "King" first worked for the Telephone Company during vacations while attending school between 1899 and 1907, when he became a Lineman in Boston. Feb. 27, 1910, he was District Foreman at Salem, and after trying his hand at a few more Plant positions he was made District Plant Chief at Lowell on Dec. 1. 1923.

Dec., 1924, Topics—Harold A. Amidon, who has been ap-

pointed Manager of the Providence Toll office, entered the employ of the Company in August, 1920. After finishing the student training course, he was assigned to Springfield as Assistant Traffic Manager. In 1923, after taking the toll training course at Philadelphia, he was appointed Assistant Traffic Manager at Springfield in charge of toll.

Dec., 1924, Topics—When Jack Barry, formerly Manager at Springfield and now District Manager for N.H., left Springfield to take up his new duties, he spoke briefly in appreciation of the co-operation he had found in a rare degree, both from his associates and from the public.

Manager Shaw, his successor, was presented a large bouquet of roses the day he assumed his new duties.

Dec., 1924, Topics—New Stock Room and Garage.

The Springfield District has recently acquired a new stock room and garage. It is situated on Columbia Terrace and the building has 26,200 feet of floor space and in addition has a yard of 22,500 square feet. There is a large, well equipped workroom where the necessary repair work is done on the cars.

The building also houses a large recreation room and classroom for the men as well as offices of the district foreman, cable foreman, installation foreman and division safety supervisor.

Carl E. Parker, Northampton District Traffic Manager, was transferred to the Western Division Traffic headquarters at Springfield.

Bartholomew A. Curry, who has been with the Commercial and Traffic Depts. on various jobs since 1922, succeeded Mr. Parker at Northampton.

Elmer F. Ardoff, formerly Acting District Traffic Manager of the Worcester District, became the District Traffic Manager at Springfield in January, 1925, succeeding George A. Morley, who was transferred to Boston as Toll Supervisor.

Linwood L. Ross was promoted from Traffic Manager, Pittsfield District, to Division Toll Supervisor in the Division office at Springfield in January, 1925.

James Murphy was transferred from Boston to the position of Assistant District Traffic Manager at Springfield, succeeding Harold A. Amidon.

Eliza Reid, of River Central Office, and Irene L. Stokes, of

Walnut, have been transferred to the Division Traffic office, reporting to the Division Traffic Engineer, in January, 1925.

Generous Old Lady (using telephone for first time—to Operator)—As you've been so nice and attentive, my dear, I'm putting an extra nickel in the box for yourself.—Boston *Transcript*.

Feb., 1925, Topics—Get-together at Springfield.

Division Superintendents B. T. Miller, C. W. Dufresne and R. C. Marden; F. J. Healey, Division Auditor of Receipts; W. A. McCoy, District Plant Chief; J. H. Weinheimer, District Commercial Manager, and J. F. Shaw, Manager of the Springfield Exchange, were invited by the employees of the respective departments of Springfield to meet with them to become acquainted with one another, and to extend a hand of good fellowship with greetings for the new year.

A few more changes were announced in Topics of March, 1925:

Philip S. Hesseltine of the General office has been transferred to the Springfield District as Assistant District Traffic Manager, succeeding Thomas F. Williams, transferred to the Engineering Dept. in Boston.

Nelson E. Horton, Assistant District Traffic Mgr. at Springfield, has been appointed to a position in the Division Traffic Engineering.

Carl W. Proctor, formerly of the Plant, has been made Assistant to the Division Traffic Engineer.

The first advanced toll course for Chief Operators in the Western Division was started at Springfield, on Jan. 26, 1925. The course was under the direction of L. L. Ross, Division Toll Supervisor; and Ella Lampson, Springfield Toll Instructor, conducted the class.

Alice Mansfield was appointed Chief Operator at Indian Orchard Feb. 1, 1925. Miss Mansfield went to work at Springfield as an Operator in Sept., 1908. In July, 1910, she was advanced to a Supervisor and later she was promoted to Instructor, Observer and Branch Exchange Supervisor.

Daisy Jarvis was still Chief Operator at Chicopee, having officiated in that capacity 21 years. Another surprise birthday party was tendered her April 1, 1925, in their attractively deco-

rated quarters, at which a sumptuous steak dinner was served by the operators.

May, 1925, Topics—Plant Changes.

J. W. Forssen, Division Supervisor of Plant Methods, recently announced the addition to his staff of three field supervisors. They are C. A. Morey, formerly Wire Chief at Pittsfield, George Wright, formerly Wire Chief at Keene and Luke Dean, formerly Wire Chief at Fitchburg. Mr. Morey will handle outside construction work, Mr. Wright, central office installation, and Mr. Dean, sub-station installation activities.

Aug., 1925, Topics—Springfield Commercial Outing.

Monday, June 29, the Commercial folks of Springfield, including the Division and District office forces, spent a most enjoyable evening at a "dog roast" held at Chapin Pond, Ludlow.

Swimming and dancing were followed by a picnic lunch; the lunch committee consisted of Mrs. Pepper, chairman; Miss Eleanor Healey and Miss Edna Pierce. They were assisted by Mrs. Blodgett and Miss Eva Flagg. The lunch which they furnished could not have been improved upon.

District Manager Weinheimer, Manager Shaw and Mr. Pepper performed conspicuous service in roasting the hot "dogs" in the pouring rain. Mr. Starr, Miss Underwood and Miss Reed gave an exhibition waltz which was a feature of the evening. Marion Stack and Jane Corcoran were very much in the limelight by winning first prize in the watermelon eating contest. Dave Dunham put on a "Raggerty Bones" act, which was a hummer. Manager Shaw and "Jack" Lucier gave a duet, which, with a little practice, might have put Van and Schenk to shame.

Mr. Dufresne and Mr. Weinheimer favored the party with a few remarks and stories. Miss Healey, Jack Lucier and Bill Ahearn favored the crowd with a trio which was heavily encored. Anyone who missed the party will never know how much they missed. Miss Dorothy Underwood served on the Transportation Committee and Mr. Hanford did the scouting for a location.

Frederick A. Holt, former District Traffic Manager at Fitch-

burg, was transferred to the Division Traffic Engineers office in Sept., 1925.

Oct., 1925, Topics—C. F. Hepburn, recently appointed Western Division Plant Accountant, started with our Company on Oct. 3, 1910, as a Clerk in the old Jamaica Plain District. A little later Mr. Hepburn was made Assistant Supervisor of Coding under Frank Hunt. "Hep" then went through various stages of the accounting activities. He was for a time Supervisor of special work, Assistant to the Chief Plant Accountant, and Division Plant Accountant in Vermont. When the Vermont office was moved, he was transferred back to the General Accounting office.

Lawrence R. Nickerson was appointed Central Office Repairman at Springfield Oct. 12, 1925. "Nick's" telephone career started in Yarmouth, N. S., in 1917, with the Canadian Bell Telephone Co. Here he acquired a general knowledge of the business by setting poles, running wire, installing telephones, collecting bills, etc. After five years he was attracted to Bermuda by the fame of its climate and the persuasions of a friend, who was working for the Bermuda Telephone Co., a subsidiary of the International Telephone Co. The first year passed pleasantly enough in spite of the rather lax workmanship performed by two natives of the telephone firm. The second year, Nick began to lose his accustomed energy, and fearing it might decline to the status of the two natives, he heeded an invitation to join the Telephone Company at Springfield, where resided his uncle, Ramond O. Nickerson.

It was Sept. 18, 1923, when he started to work in Springfield as an Installer, and soon he became a PBX Installer, and sub-station Repairman.

Nov., 1925, Clyde T. Hubbard was appointed Springfield District Plant Engineer. He had been serving as Northampton District Plant Engineer since January.

Jan., 1926, Topics—Theresa A. Tierney, formerly Chief Operator at the Walnut office, has been appointed District Employment Supervisor in charge of employment and training in Springfield.

The introduction of machine switching in Springfield, in the near future, entails greater responsibilities in the employ-

ment and training, and Miss Tierney's experience and ability make her well qualified to assume the duties of this position.

Agnes Dowd, Chief Operator at Palmer, was appointed District Chief Operator for the Springfield District. Having successfully filled the positions of Toll Supervisor, Toll Observer, Assistant Chief Operator and Chief Operator, Miss Dowd is well qualified to assume the duties of her new assignment.

Jan., 1926, Topics—Catherine M. McQuade has been appointed Chief Operator of the Walnut office. Prior to this, Miss McQuade was the Evening Chief Operator of the River office. Sixteen years of experience in traffic work, during which time she has held the positions of Operator, Supervisor, Assistant Chief Operator and Evening Chief Operator, have given Miss McQuade a thorough training in all phases of traffic management.

Jan., 1926, Topics—Harold F. West came to the Western Division as Assistant Force Engineer Nov. 15, 1925. He entered the employ of the New York Telephone Co. Sept. 19, 1921, as Traffic Supervisor, in charge of force adjustment work for the 18 manual and 4 machine switching offices in the South Brooklyn Division.

Feb., 1926, Topics—On Dec. 14, Ralph L. Sheppard, formerly Schedule Engineer in the Metropolitan Division, was transferred to the Western Division, where he will be Division Machine Switching Engineer. Mr. Sheppard became a telephone man in October, 1904, when he joined the substation installation force at Lowell. August the next year he transferred to Worcester, taking up substation installation and repair work and later construction activities. April, 1906, found him in Fitchburg installing the present central office. After a few more assignments, he was delegated to study the panel type machine switching system, and to organize a training program for maintenance men.

Clerk (taking application for telephone service): "Is there an instrument on the premises?"

Applicant: "We have a piano. Will that make any difference?" *Telephone Review.*

March, 1926, Topics—Effective March 1, Ralph C. Marden, Division Supt. of Plant for several years, was promoted to



General Plant Supervisor in Boston, reporting to Mr. Schultz.

Bartlett T. Miller, after a year and a half as Division Traffic Supt., was called to Boston as General Traffic Supervisor, reporting to Mr. Darling.

Joe E. Harrell, who has been Toll Traffic Supervisor on Mr. Darling's Staff, has been made Traffic Supt. of the Western Division in succession to Mr. Miller. Mr. Harrell entered the Long Lines Dept. of the American Telephone Co. in New York in 1913. He was, at various times, in charge of Traffic operations in 22 cities in the South and Middle West, before coming to New England in 1925.

John H. Dodge was appointed Division Plant Supt., being transferred from Providence where he has been heading Southern Plant. He has been a telephone man since 1899, when he worked for the Northern New York Telephone Co. as a Ground hand, and later as a Lineman at Newburgh. In 1909 he joined the New York Telephone Co. as a Clerk and the next year became a District Wire Chief. After working at different plant positions until 1924, he joined the New England Co. at Providence as Division Supt. of Plant.

Robert Pruyn becomes the new District Manager of the Springfield-Pittsfield District.

Miss Marguerite Parker, Division Instructor in the Western, has been appointed District Chief Operator of the Vermont District, having entered the employ of the Company in Holyoke in November, 1911.

Charles A. Weston, who has been Division Commercial Assistant on the Division Staff at Springfield, was appointed Division Commercial Engineer,—the first appointment made by the New England Co. under this title.

April, 1926, Topics—John H. Weinheimer, formerly District Manager of the Springfield District, including Springfield, Pittsfield and the Northampton Areas, has been promoted to the Western Division office, where he becomes Division Commercial Supervisor.

April, 1926, Topics—Ralph E. Jones has just been appointed Division Supervisor of Sales in the Commercial Department with headquarters in the Western Division office at Springfield. He came to the Company in September, 1919.

After taking the students' course, he became Traffic Inspector and Assistant to the Force Engineer. In 1922 he was made Assistant Traffic Manager in the Malden and Dorchester Districts, District Traffic Manager of the Mystic District and the same in the Pittsfield District.

Mrs. Louisa M. Dunbar has been appointed to the new position of Division Commercial Cashier. The pay-roll and voucher work formerly done in the Springfield, Worcester and Vermont Districts has been transferred to the Division office at Springfield. Mrs. Dunbar was employed Jan. 19, 1920, as Stenographer in the Springfield Manager's office. Oct. 22, 1923, she was made Cashier of the Springfield District and her work in that position merits the promotion.

Miss S. Elizabeth Bunnell, Stenographer in the Division Commercial office, will be Mrs. Dunbar's assistant.

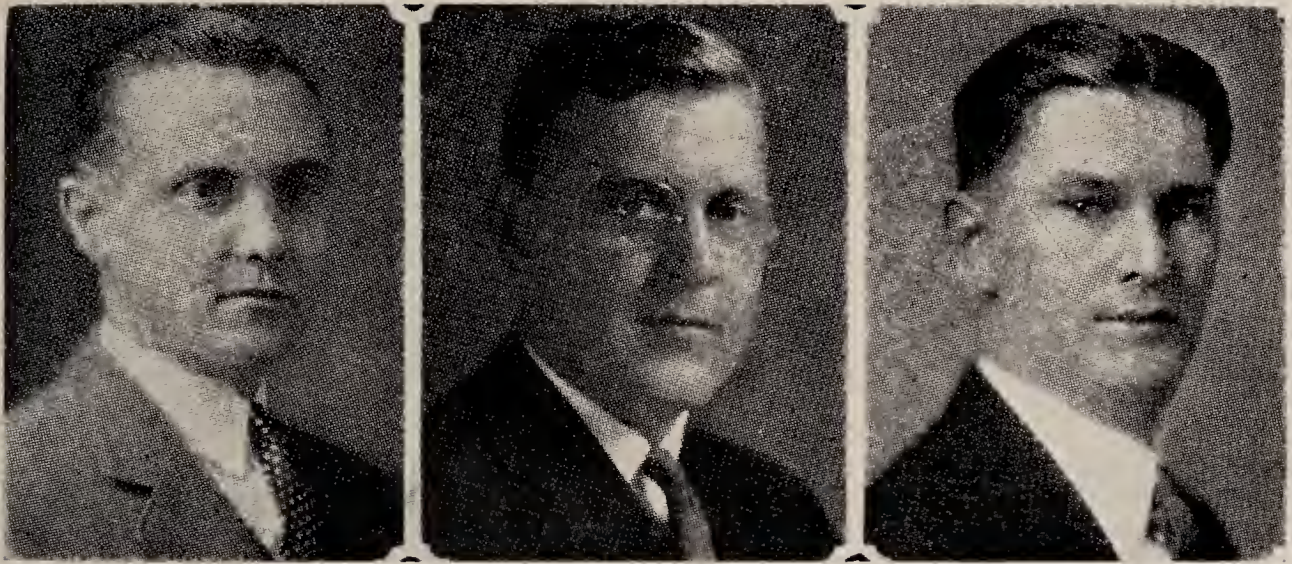
Apr., 1926, Topics—Banquet in Springfield.

On February 15th the Revenue Accounting folks of Springfield enjoyed one of the most successful parties ever held by local telephone people. Amid Valentine decorations, a chicken dinner was served at the Highland Hotel, after which everyone adjourned to the ballroom, where a few of the talented ones staged a minstrel show.

While the orchestra was tuning up, Philip N. Dinsmore, Chief Toll Supervisor, gave some attractive gifts to the seven girls selecting the lucky numbers. He also had the pleasure of presenting gifts from the Toll girls to the two Toll Supervisors, Margaret E. Vail and Irene A. Dowling, in celebration of their birthdays. The evening closed with general dancing. A. R. Shepherd, Examiner of Methods, was the guest of the evening.

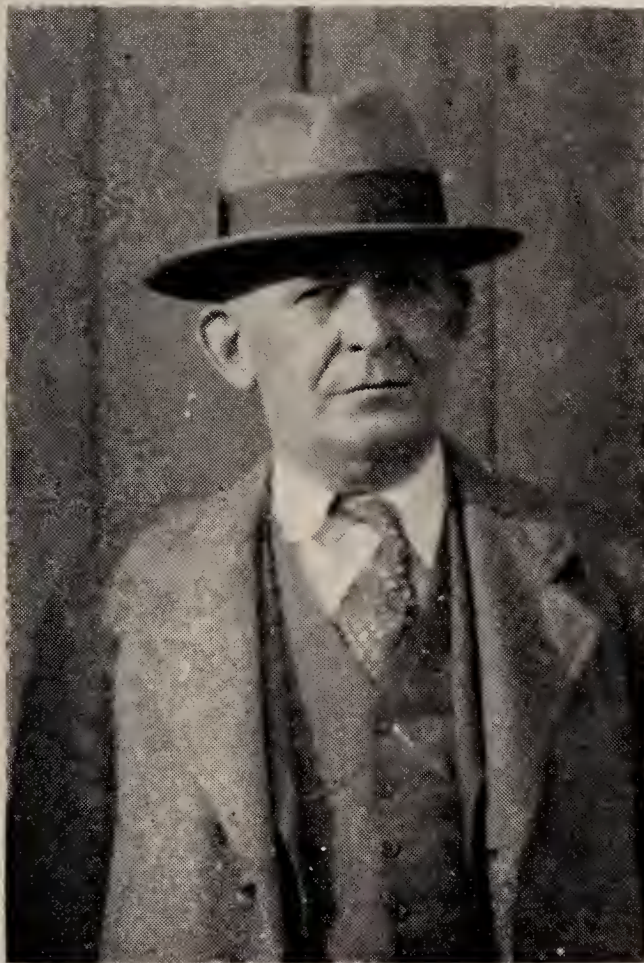
The party was arranged by the following committees: Hall & Orchestra, N. Darcy, Chairman, K. Davis; Entertainment, D. Blanchette, Chairman, L. Bourke, E. Easton, E. Baker, F. Carter; Refreshments, E. Shea, Chairman, E. Brennan, M. Bourke, M. Leahy; Decorations, E. Gifford, Chairman, G. Davis, D. Crawford, R. Sullivan, C. Griffin, M. Lyons.

H. Leonard Hutchinson was appointed Springfield Head Line Assigner April 12, 1926, succeeding Roland D. Rogers, who was assigned to the post of Records Supervisor. "Hutch" joined the Company at Springfield June 22, 1920, reporting to

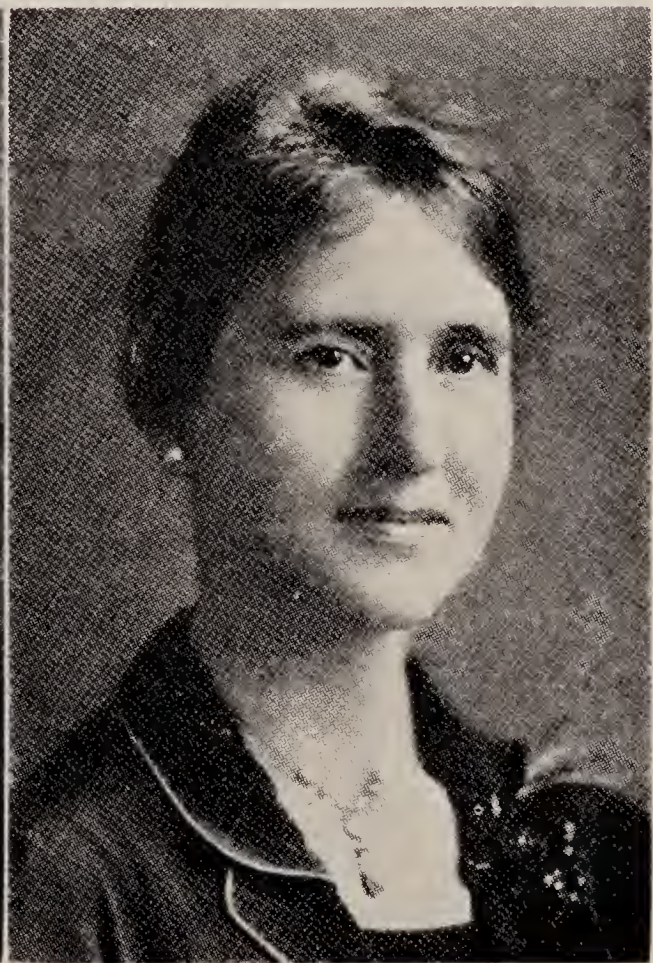


CHANGES IN WESTERN DIVISION ORGANIZATION—1927

*Left to right: J. E. Harrell, C. W. Baier, R. J. Dee.*



FRED ROCKHOLD



MARGARET E. CONNELLY





A DIVISION PUBLIC RELATIONS MEETING—1946

*Left to right:* Casimer A. Marcou, John L. Crosby, Richard J. Dee, Erskine N. White, Exie E. Geoffrion, Ralph E. Jones.



J. Fred R. Smith, Acting Line Assigner. His pastimes are bowling and tennis, in which he has a special aptitude.

Richard J. Dee was assigned to the position of District Traffic Supervisor of the Springfield District in April, 1926.

Harold F. West was appointed Force Engineer succeeding Mr. Dee.

June, 1926, Topics—Irving L. Fisher was transferred to the newly formed Division Commercial Engineering Department in Springfield May 1, 1926. Irving, starting in 1910, in Boston, has spent most of his time in Maine and was Manager of the Bangor Exchange for many years. Early in 1925 he was transferred to the General Commercial Engineers office at Boston, where he worked on rate studies. He will be the Division Rate Engineer, a new position, reporting to C. A. Weston.

A picture in Topics showed Manager Fisher, while in Maine, sitting in a room, holding a skein of wool with outstretched hands, while an elderly rural customer wound the strands into a ball. This accommodating spirit augurs well for those calling Irving on questions of rate practice.

Effective May 1, Clark M. Wilson was appointed to the new position of Commercial Survey Engineer for the Western Division. He reports directly to C. A. Weston, Division Commercial Engineer. Clark, or "Hank" was employed by Robert A. Davis, Assistant Commercial Engineer at Boston, on July 31, 1911, to work on commercial surveys. He will be able to descry the telephone and line growth in any exchange, or section,—after peering into his "Crystal ball."

Eugene E. Cronin was transferred from the Worcester District Commercial office to the Western Division in May, 1926, where he will assist Mr. Weinheimer, Division Commercial Supervisor. Mr. Cronin started in September, 1924, as a Student. He was on Machine Switching instruction work in the Lawrence, Kenmore, Stadium and Aspinwall Exchanges and then was assigned to the General Commercial office in Boston.

On June 7, 1926, Elmer F. Ardoff, who has been District Traffic Manager at Springfield, was transferred to the staff of the General Supervisor of Methods at Boston. He entered the Company in 1920 and has held the positions of Force Engineer and later District Traffic Manager at Worcester.

A number of girls entered the Telephone Co. about this time who sufficed to embellish the Springfield Commercial offices:

Gladys M. Payne was engaged as a Stenographer in April, 1926, in the Division office. She was an honor pupil during the entire three years at the High School of Commerce.

Margaret L. Reed also entered the Company as a Stenographer a little before this time.

Alice E. Sheldon was appointed Cashier to take the place of Theresa C. Hillman, who resigned.

Martha H. Maloney presented herself at the business office July 26, 1926, and was appointed a Service Representative.

Ruth E. Larson was appointed Stenographer in the Sales Department, reporting to H. J. Lucier, Division Sales Manager, in place of Florence G. Freyer, who returned to her former work in the Traffic Department.

Charles H. Pillsbury spent about a year in Springfield as District Foreman after the Northampton District was discontinued, and was then transferred to Vermont as District Construction Foreman.

William F. Langan was transferred to Springfield August 29, 1926, as District Cable Foreman. He started work May 27, 1906, in or near New York City.

John Blair came to Springfield Aug. 29, 1926, about four years before his retirement. He had worked in Worcester since the early 1890s, and was District Store Keeper when transferred. He was assigned to the Division Motor Vehicles and Supplies, and, about 1928, to the inventory of furniture and fixtures, which Walter Pepper was conducting throughout the Division.

Edward J. Tyre was appointed Springfield District Building Supervisor. "Ted" joined the Company in 1917 at Springfield, where he entered the Buildings, Motor Vehicles and Supply Dept. He assisted Walter Pepper with the inventory of furniture and fixtures. He went to Worcester and opened up the new Worcester Building, remaining there a year and a half. He also opened the new Pittsfield Building and others.

Etta L. Jones, Chief Clerk in the Division Manager's office, accumulated information describing the advantages, environ-



ments and rates in most of the vacation centers in the Western Division.

John H. Weinheimer was transferred to the Metropolitan Division in August, 1926, and was succeeded by Fred F. Marston, Division Commercial Supervisor of the Metropolitan Division.

Fred Marston started as a Student in the Engineering Dept. in Boston in June, 1922. In September he was assigned to the Metropolitan Commercial Dept. and later was Manager at Quincy, followed by his appointment to Metropolitan Commercial Supervisor.

Wallace A. McCoy, District Plant Chief at Springfield, was appointed District Plant Supt. of the No. 5 (North West) office, Cambridge.

Cleveland A. Morey was appointed District Construction Supervisor of the Worcester District, having direct charge of the outside work in connection with the new dial central office.

"Tom" W. Hyland was appointed Maintenance Supervisor in the enlarged Worcester District in August.

Sept., 1926, Topics—John H. Dodge was transferred from the position of Division Supt. of Plant at Springfield to the same position in the Metropolitan Division, having general supervision of maintenance, installation and service orders.

The Northampton District, which had been established Jan. 1, 1921, to include the Holyoke, Greenfield and Northampton Exchange Areas, was discontinued Sept. 1, 1926. The Holyoke and Northampton Areas were returned to the Springfield District, while the Greenfield Area rejoined the Pittsfield District.

Francis M. Smith was transferred from the Northampton District Engineers to the Division Engineers at Springfield, about Sept. 1, 1926, when the Northampton District was discontinued. Frank, a native of Easthampton, was first employed Aug. 24, 1924, at Northampton, to help on the outside plant inventory, which was being made throughout the Company in connection with a new schedule of rates, which was to be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities. This data, according to Frank, was later transferred to forms, made up to cover all types of plant, and constituted the begin-

ning of the Division Records Departments, which came under the jurisdiction of the Division Plant Engineers.

Raymond Daboll was the first Records Engineer in the Western Division, previous to which he was Springfield District Plant Engineer.

Lawrence B. Shepherd was transferred from Northampton to Springfield as Transmission Tester. "Larry" had joined the Northampton Plant Oct. 6, 1911, and had worked up to Testman.

Mrs. West: "The average woman has a vocabulary of only 500 words."

Grocer: "It's a small stock but think of the turnover."—  
Topics.

Sept., 1926, Topics—Several important changes in supervisory positions in the Western Division went into effect on Sept. 1st.

Fred Rockhold has been transferred from the position of Supt. of Construction in the Metropolitan Division to succeed John H. Dodge as Division Supt. of Plant, Springfield.

Mr. Rockhold started to work for the New York Telephone Co. as a splicer's helper in the Manhattan Bronx Division, April 27, 1897. He traveled along the path of experience to Splicer and Splicing Foreman, and soon after he was advanced to the position of Construction Supervisor in the Westchester Division.

After becoming Supt. of Construction in the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co., and District Plant Supt. of the Westchester Division, he was appointed Division Supt. of Construction in New York, supervising all construction work from the East side to the West side and from the Battery to the Bronx. He came to the New England Co. in 1925.

John W. Forssen has been appointed District Plant Supt. of the Springfield District, which now includes Northampton, Holyoke, Palmer and Westfield Areas. For some time he has been District Plant Chief at Pittsfield and succeeds Wallis A. McCoy, transferred to the Metropolitan Division.

John Forssen started to work in 1896, and was appointed Foreman in Boston in 1907. In 1909 he was transferred to

Springfield as Division Foreman and in 1924 went to Pittsfield as District Plant Chief.

Charles E. Lyons and Ralph L. Sheppard were appointed Construction Supervisor and Maintenance Supervisor, respectively, in the enlarged Springfield District, in August, 1926.

William H. Shea was transferred from Northampton to Springfield as Special Agent for the Division, attending to 'right of way' affairs. Starting with the Company at Northampton in 1900 as Night Operator, he worked up to Wire Chief by 1911, and was appointed Special Agent of the Northampton District in 1923.

C. W. Baier has been appointed District Traffic Manager of the Springfield District, coming from the Southern Division where he was Division Supervisor of Traffic. He came to the New England Co. in 1924 from the Bell Telephone Co. of Penn. Clarence has been a Telephone man for 12 years. Before his transfer to this Company he was District Supt. of Traffic for the Trenton, N. J., District.

Sept., 1926, Topics—Golf Match

The first annual golf match of the Springfield-Worcester Commercial Districts of the Western Division was fought on the Cohasse Golf Club in Southbridge, July 24.

The Springfield representatives presented a well balanced team and they were showing the Worcester representatives what to do and what not to do on a golf course.

The Springfield team was comprised of Capt. "Bob" Pruyn, "Al" Starr, "Jack" Lucier, "Max" Holmes, Ralph Hoit, Harold Ranshousen.

The Worcester team was composed of Capt. "Jim" Fair, "Jimmie" Williams, "Porge" Murphy, "Art" Frosthalm, "Ed" Warner, "Fred" Kegler. Williams was the star performer of the day, turning in a card of 88.

After all was said and done the totals proved the Springfield crowd superior by three strokes. After a chicken banquet, prepared in real Southern style, toastmaster Frosthalm congratulated the Springfield representatives on their showing. Captain Pruyn invited the Worcester boys to a return match at his home club in Westfield.

Sept., 1926, Topics—In connection with the placing and splicing of central office cable for the new Springfield Machine Switching Unit, the seemingly impossible proposition of completion by August 15, was given to District Foreman Charles E. Lyons to accomplish. But little things like this never worry Charlie.

Equal to the occasion, Mr. Lyons, with his Supervising Construction Foreman D. J. Thomas, not only accomplished this but did it in such a way that he saved making about 36 1200 pr. splices at a money saving on this one job of about \$2600, and also saved about 180 feet of 1200 pr. cable ends which would have been necessary for splices or about \$300 worth of cable.

Cables in some cases were pulled through three manholes, cable vault and up risers to main frame on third floor without a splice, and in two of the manholes, the cable was pulled at right angle turns in opposite directions.

A. N. Porter has been transferred to the Western Division Plant Supervisor's force to work upon special studies. "Al" has been working for the Company since November, 1916, as Field Engineer, Facilities Assigner and Construction Analysis Engineer in the Fitchburg Area.

Wire Chief H. M. MacCausland of Worcester was promoted to the Department of Plant Methods and Results at Springfield in Sept., 1926. "Mac" has been connected with the Worcester exchange and District nearly 30 years. He began his Telephone career with the Century Telephone Co. at Manchester, N.H., in 1897, and then worked for the Citizens Telephone Co. at Franklin. He was transferred to Worcester in April, 1899, where he has been Wire Chief for the past nine years. Mac is a natural mechanic and has made a study of all the mechanical branches of Plant work.

Oct., 1926, Topics—T. J. McDonald, from District Store Keeper, Springfield, to Supervisor of Supplies and Motor Vehicles, Springfield.

George Abbott from District Store Keeper, Fitchburg, to Maintenance Department, Springfield, doing special work.

Augustus McAulay from District Plant Chief to Supervisor of Outside Construction.

Oct., 1926, Topics—Springfield Plant Outing.

The Plant gang at Springfield, held their Annual Outing sponsored by Local No. 4, I.B.T.W., on Sept. 11, at Turner's Park, Longmeadow.

A program of sports was run off under the direction of Harry Oakes. Dashes, relay and novelty races held the attention of about 300, while Eddie Shea, our congenial Carpenter, proceeded to clean up the field. After winning every event on the Card, Ed was presented with a beautiful (?) loving cup suitably engraved.

After the races, a ball game between the single men, captained by Joe Sheehan, defeated a team of benedicts, by George Carty, to the tune of 18-2. The umpiring of "Bill" Culver, Chicopee Wire Chief, featured.

A barnyard golf tournament was next on the program with George Downs holding his own against all comers. At four o'clock the gang proceeded to clean up a plentiful supply of fried chicken and all the fixin's, after which there were many tummy aches.

The party spelled the doom of all straw hats with Sabby Napolitan leading in their destruction. Any hats that were not broken were shattered by Sabby's bombs. The only hat to escape was Johnny Forssen's brand new (?) Panama (15 years old) and that was saved only after much pleading on the part of Charley Lyons.

The party was run off nicely by a committee composed of the following: J. Wilder Campbell, Edward Sheridan, "Chick" Lyons, Walter MacDonald, Harry Oakes, George Carty, Eddie Shea, John Paponeau, Billie Keyes and Joseph Sheehan.

Several guests were present from Boston, Worcester and Providence, including our past and present Supts., Mr. Dodge and Mr. Rockhold, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Forssen.

Nov., 1926, Topics—On October 1, William S. Shaw, of the Commercial office, Springfield, retired from active service. "Bill" commenced 21 years ago as Contract Agent. His work of late years has been in developing branch exchanges and the many large installations which have been made under his personal supervision have brought him in touch with many prominent men of this vicinity, all of whom speak highly of his business-like methods and his accommodating spirit.

Nov., 1926, Topics—Equipment Outing.

Members of the Division Equipment Department and their families held their second annual “dog” roast October 3, at Page Boulevard Grove. “Chefs” Leo Duplissa and “Shorty” Sheldon prepared the “dogs”, which were enjoyed by all after working up their appetites by competing for the prizes in the sporting events, which were run off by Bill Buckland. All stayed for the finals which consisted of a Charleston exhibition by “Stretch” Hooker, and a song by Leo Duplissa. The members of the party expressed their thanks for the efforts put into the affair by the committee which was headed by George Beecher.

Miss Eva Diamond, Division Traffic Pay Roll Clerk, was married to Frank C. Buck, Springfield Wire Chief, in October, 1926. Miss Diamond joined the Company in August, 1912, as an Operator at Springfield.

Dec., 1926, Topics—Walter D. Berry, Traffic Manager of the Springfield local offices, was appointed Traffic Manager of the Westfield, Palmer, Holyoke and Northampton areas.

On Nov. 9, 1926, Lawrence J. Shurtleff joined the Springfield District Traffic force as Traffic Manager. He was first employed in Boston Sept. 6, 1926, in the Traffic Engineer’s Dept. and was transferred from there to Springfield.

Dec., 1926, Topics—The Plant Health Course in Springfield was under the supervision of Margaret Connelly of the Division Plant Supt.’s office. The course was conducted in two classes, 26 Commercial girls meeting on Monday nights and 17 Plant girls on Tuesday nights, of which 37 completed the entire course. Fred L. Beebe, District Safety Supervisor, assisted Miss Connelly on the lessons pertaining more particularly to First Aid.

Old Lady (Witnessing tug of war for the first time).

“Wouldn’t it be simpler, dear, for them to get a kinfe and cut it?”—Topics.

Ethel I. Healy was engaged to work in the Division Commercial Engineers office in November, 1926, reporting to Charles A. Weston.

Allan S. Morton, who was transferred to the Springfield Manager’s office in August, 1926, with the title of Collector,

had his position changed to District Directory Advertising Supervisor, in November.

Eugene F. Goggin was transferred to the Installation and Maintenance Dept. "Gene" went to work for the Company at Springfield Nov. 4, 1924. At first he was Time Keeper and then a Helper in the Cable Department.

## CHAPTER 28

### *Springfield Exchange Area*

*1927-1930*

ON JAN. 1, 1927, Merrill B. Steere was transferred to the Division Plant Staff, Central Office Methods and Results. "Ike" started with the Company Sept. 12, 1912, as an Installer at Springfield, and then became a Combination Repairman, keeping subscribers' telephones and PBX boards in order. After serving in the 401st Telegraph Battalion from 1917 to 1919, doing heavy line construction work "over there," he rejoined the Company as a Central Office Repairman.

March, 1927, Topics—Commercial service observing is being inaugurated throughout the Company under the supervision of John J. Reddy, the Training Supervisor, and Harry V. Keefe, the Supervisor Commercial Results. In the Western Division it is being handled by E. E. Cronin with Alta M. Lyman and Elizabeth G. Higgins as observers.

April, 1927, Topics—Commercial Changes.

Fred F. Marston, former Division Commercial Supervisor, was appointed District Manager of the Springfield District.

Ralph E. Jones, former Division Sales Supervisor, has been appointed Division Commercial Supervisor.

Gene McLaughlin is a newcomer to Western Mass., formerly being Manager of the Montpelier, Vt. Exchange. He has been appointed Office Manager in the Springfield area.



Gene started as a Night Operator in Randolph in July, 1913, and in August, 1918, he entered military service. In 1919 he was assigned to special work with the Traffic Force Engineer and Nov. 1, 1920, was appointed Assistant District Traffic Manager of the First Central District. After being in charge of Flying Squadron work in the Metropolitan Division in 1925, he was appointed Montpelier Manager.

Max Holmes has been appointed to the position of Sales Supervisor in the Springfield office. Max is comparatively a newcomer in our business, having started in March, 1926. Since that time he has acted as Commercial Representative in the Springfield office.

May, 1927, Topics—Joe E. Harrell, Western Division Traffic Supt., goes to Boston in Mr. Miller's place as General Traffic Supervisor.

Clarence W. Baier, District Traffic Supt. at Springfield, has taken Mr. Harrell's place as Division Supt. of Traffic.

Richard J. Dee succeeds to Mr. Baier's place as District Traffic Supt., Springfield.

May, 1927, Topics—Western Group joins C.O.E.I.

The Central Office Equipment Installation forces are glad to welcome to their midst the group of sixty-odd equipment men of the Western Division. The forces under Supervisor of Installation Homer J. Hebert were transferred to this department as of April 1. "Beau" Hebert has charge of central office work in the Western Division.

June, 1927, Topics—Frank Farrar, of the Cable dept., Springfield, died on March 6. He entered the employ of the Telephone Co. in 1883, and after a few years resigned to work for the Electric Light Co. at Boston. On June 1, 1898, he returned to the Telephone Co. entering the Construction dept. as a Lineman. On March 4, 1910, he was transferred to the Cable dept. where he remained until his illness. Mr. Farrar was extremely popular with his fellow workmen and will be greatly missed.

June, 1927, Topics—Harry W. Muzzy was appointed Acting Supervising Foreman, C.O.E.I. on June 1. Harry started his telephone career with the Citizens Telephone Co. in N.H. in

1901. He managed the local exchange in Tilton, N.H., and so knows the business from all angles.

Harry came to work in Springfield July 3, 1911, and has held various positions in central office installation work. He has handled central office work in Western Mass. and Vt., with the exception of the Pittsfield District beyond the Berkshires. He is now Acting Supervisor over the State of Vermont.

June, 1927, Topics—Effective May 1, James A. Williams, Manager at Whitinsville, was appointed Division Sales Supervisor, which position has been open since the Western Division District re-organization in March. "Jim" is very well qualified for his new position in that his telephone activities have always been centered about "Sales." He served in the Directory Advertising dept. in the Metropolitan Division, and as Sales Supervisor in the Worcester District before his appointment as Whitinsville Manager. He built a commendable record in station gain in Whitinsville, and he will be able to give every member of the Division the advantage of his diversified experience.

Aug., 1927, Topics—Springfield Dial Office.

Springfield, the City of Homes, is dialing its telephone calls now. The cut-over to Machine, the first in the Western Division and the largest in our territory, took place on July 9th.

Manager John F. Shaw invited a group of officials of the city and nearby places, and many telephone veterans were present to see the transformation. At five minutes before midnight, Mayor Fordis C. Parker stepped forward, pressed a button and immediately three floors of 295 Worthington Street became a beehive of industry. More than 100 plant men were standing by ready for the word. They speedily pulled the heat coils, first in the River office, then Walnut, and in five minutes, 22,000 of Springfield's telephones were on dial. The mayor dialed the first call, Waldo Cook, Editor of the Springfield Republican, for a chat and received a dial set in a handsome block as a souvenir.

As early as March 7th, instruction of pupils from the sixth grade up in public schools was undertaken by Mrs. Mary Rycroft LaForce and Elizabeth Ryan. It was easily the best dial introductory job done, no flying squadron being used.

About 160 operators received the entire training which consisted of five lessons. In conjunction with the Manual "A" work, 30 girls received Call Indicator training as there are eleven positions of Call Indicator equipment in the "B" Board in the Manual Office. Elizabeth M. Callahan, with the aid of eight Instructors and a Clerk, accomplished the Call Indicator and Manual "A" work.

For toll work, 84 girls were trained, some for outward and some for inward. Theresa Tierney trained the Instructors.

About the first of June, nine girls were trained as Instructors in the workings of what is known as the M.S. "A" Board. It is to this board that the subscriber comes when he dials "Operator" or when he dials a number affected by a change or disconnection. A large amount of "AB" traffic is also handled here. It was necessary to train sixty girls for this work. Rose Carlin handled the instruction of all M.S. "A" people.

Since Holyoke, Chicopee, Indian Orchard and Westfield dial into the machine it was necessary to instruct Operators at those offices in the details of machine operation. Margaret Kennedy of Holyoke supervised this training.

B. O. Curry, Supervisor of Machine Switching, was in general charge of all the training activities.

On the night of the cut-over Arthur Horton, Division Traffic Engineer and Carl W. Proctor, who is now Traffic Manager of the Springfield Machine Unit, played an important part on the dispatch board. From Boston, Harold E. Jarvis attended in his capacity as Machine Switching Supervisor. The following Traffic appointments have been made for the new office:

Rose A. Carlin, Chief Operator of the Machine Unit; Ruth Seldon, Assistant Chief Operator; Katherine J. Toner, Assistant Chief Operator, Manual Unit; Mary C. Corcoran, District Chief Operator. Catherine M. McQuade continues as Chief Operator in the Manual Unit.

The new Springfield Office is the first step-by-step job to be made entirely by the Western Electric Co.

From the Plant point of view, Frank Wrisley, Cutover Supervisor, was the man **behind** the gun, since each operation

was reported to him as it was completed. Gene Lowell and twelve men pulled the River MD frame heat coils; Joseph Sheehan and his gang of eight pulled the Walnut MD frame heat coils; Joe Collins supervised the cutting of jumper cables; selector monitor supervision was done by Arthur Noel and eight men; Traffic control, F. E. Dundas and eight men; pulling B.C.O. tools in machine office, R. N. Calkins and twenty-five men; checking PBXs after cut, Walter Ely and ten men.

All connected with the job did themselves proud. Frank Wrisley, Billy Francis, Harry Jones, Frank Buck and Ralph Shepherd spent many long hard hours from the beginning of installation to cutover. Roland Rogers, Record Supervisor, and his crew did a great job in changing Plant records.

NEIGHBOR: Where is your brother, Freddie?

FREDDIE: He's in the house playing a duet.

I finished first.—*Arcanum*

Wayne Wood, Commercial Representative in Springfield, was performing well in sales work. In five months he made 410 sales; annual revenue \$9,062.40. In addition Wayne completed 25 surveys each month.

Elmer A. Wagner, Collector at Northampton, was transferred to the Springfield Manager's office in July, 1927, as Commercial Representative.

John F. Enwright, Commercial Representative at Springfield, was transferred to Northampton. In July, 1926, John had been made Office Manager of the Springfield District.

Webster T. Hunt, who was a Commercial Representative in the Holyoke office, was appointed District Directory Advertising Supervisor at Springfield, in September.

Oct., 1927, Topics—Ralph E. Jones was transferred from the post of Division Commercial Supervisor to the Brocton District. Arthur W. Frosthalm, who has been Manager at Northampton, goes to Springfield in Mr. Jones' place.

Arthur Frosthalm entered the employ of the Company on Sept. 29, 1924, in the Worcester Commercial Dept. where he acted as Commercial Representative until in May, 1925, he was transferred to Ayer as Manager. In March, 1926, he was made Manager at Southbridge and from there he was transferred to Northampton.

Nov., 1927, Topics—"Blue Bells" Have Good Season.

The "Blue Bells" of Springfield enjoyed a successful baseball season, winning the championship of the Commercial Twilight League, averaging eight wins, two losses, and concluded the season in fourth place of the Triple "A" Twilight League, winning seven, and loosing seven games.

The pitching was very capably handled by Austin E. White, who pitched excellent ball for the Chicopee Hillsides in 1926; Winfield Sponberg, who attained laudable results as a pitcher for the Technical High School Team in 1925. N. (Doc. Daniels) Slevin, another competent pitcher, has acquired an admirable reputation, having pitched for the Armory in 1915.

"Babe" Steere, playing in the same capacity as pitcher, is widely known for his skillful "curves" and had the honor of a tryout with the Cincinnati Reds in 1919.

"Paddy" MacDonnell, who has played with the Ware Alligators when Goldie Bowler had a real team, did the major portion of the catching, and maybe he can't handle the "mit."

First base was well taken care of by Andy Phelan with Dick Fay as a livewire substitute on various occasions. "Shorty" Lapine covered second base, while Carl Donovan, who was on the High School All Star Team in 1925, protected third base. Well-known Eddie Trauschke, who merits the reputation of being the best semi-pro shortstop in this section, handled this position in a very efficient manner. Johnny Sweeney, of Holyoke, who played center field for the Ware Alligators in 1916-1917, creditably covered left field.

"Lolly" Kennedy and Harold Atkinson, who played center and left fields, respectively, added to the success of the "Blue Bells." Arthur Hamilton deserves credit for his playing in both left field and right field.

"Phil" was the always willing and alert mascot. Other players who helped to make the team a success were H. Ryan, W. B. Choate, George Miner, Willis Martin and Paul Cotti.

Harold Atkinson led the Triple "A" in batting, Eddie Trauschke held the lead in triples and Paddy MacDonnell was in a tie for the lead in home runs. Carl Donovan came in second in stolen bases.

Joseph A. Sneed was transferred from the General Commer-

cial Office, Boston, to Springfield as Commercial Representative.

Nov., 1927, Topics—David C. Hall was appointed Springfield District Supervisor in charge of the outside offices on October 1. Mr. Hall entered the service of the Bell System on March 1, 1912, at Louisville, Ky., and Feb. 1, 1913, was appointed District Clerk at Evansville, Ind. From April, 1917, to Oct. 1, 1927, he filled the positions of District Traffic Chief, and Traffic Supervisor at Owensville, Ky., Frankfort, Ky., Louisville, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., Marion, Ind., and Muncie, Ind. from which city he was transferred to Springfield, Mass.

Dec., 1927, Topics—The Vermont Flood.

From seven to nine inches of rain fell November 2, 3 and 4, but most of the flood damage in Springfield was in the lowlands bordering the Connecticut River in the north end. About 5,500 telephones were affected out of a total of 43,000 in the city. In some places it was necessary to pull in new cable and in other sections the cables were dried out and restored to service. The main difficulty was with the wet terminals in cellars, but the men were on the job promptly, and by Saturday night had made considerable progress.

There was no trouble on the toll lines in Springfield, but calls to and from other places were seriously affected. For several days calls were taken subject to delay.

Jan., 1928, Topics—William F. Gowdy, Division Supervisor of Supplies, and one of the best known Plant Dept. employees in the Western Division, recently resigned to accept a position as Production Manager with the Archer Rubber Co. of Milford, Mass.

Chester E. Roukes was appointed District Manager of the Springfield District, December 1st. He came with the Company Nov. 20, 1911, as a Clerk in the Revenue Accounting Dept. He was promoted to Revenue Supervisor in 1916 and became Traveling Auditor for the General Accounting May 24, 1920. March 19, 1923, he was transferred to the Commercial Dept. and served as Assistant Unit Manager, Manager and District Manager of the North West District, Metropolitan Division, Aug. 1, 1927.

Fred F. Marston, District Manager at Springfield, has been



THE GANG THAT PULLED IN THE 1800-PAIR CABLE—1928

*Left to right: Norman Slevin, John Terry, Jerry Cavanaugh, Phil O'Donnell, James Crowell, Fred McInnis, Joe Robinson.*



UNDEFEATED REVENUE ACCOUNTING BOWLING TEAM

*Seated: E. Jarvis, J. Shea, Yvonne LeBlanc, I. Lemay. Standing: I. Leslie, E. Dumont.*



DIVISION DISBURSEMENTS ACCOUNTING—1931

*Seated, left to right:* S. Black, C. F. Hepburn, R. T. Westermark (Division Auditor of Disbursements), M. F. Coyne, F. A. Jones.  
*Standing:* E. A. Walsh, R. A. Burke, A. L. Butler, R. Griffin, F. M. Collins, J. Mahoney, F. Carrigan.



JAMES A. WILLIAMS



JOHN J. REDDY





MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL OFFICE MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION—1929

*First row, left to right:* Leo Duplissa, Arthur Sheldon, Joe Collins, Ed Lancour, Carl Donovan, Earl Williams, John Edwards, *Second row:* Earl Bray, Harris Stewart, Win Sponberg, Bill Lowe, Fred Morris, Joe Lefevre, Clarence Young, Fred Williams, Frank Wrisley. *Third row:* Arthur Block, Ray Hamilton, Bill Sanderson, Bob Kingsbury, Gene Flagg, Charlie Rogers, Tom Welch (President), Nelson Pardee, Ronald McGillvary, Larry Nickerson, Leroy Rodimon.



SPRINGFIELD DEFEATS BOSTON TO WIN COMPANY CHAMPIONSHIP—1929

*Standing, left to right:* W. Sponberg, W. Plude, Manager F. Carty, J. Berry, J. Sweeney, C. Kennedy, C. Sweeney, C. Kennedy, J. McDonnell, J. Donovan, Captain E. Trauschke, C. Donovan, W. O'Connell, E. Bowler, C. Steere. *Front, P. Gordman, Mascot.*

transferred to the American Telephone Co. with headquarters at 195 Broadway, New York. His duties will be along the lines of personnel, organization and training.

Katherine Brennan was transferred from the Traffic Dept. to the Springfield Manager's office as Commercial Representative in December, 1927, and Margaret E. O'Connell was engaged as Commercial Representative at the same time.

Jan., 1928, Topics—Horace S. Holt, Division Plant Engineer, recently resigned to accept a position as Plant Engineer of the International Telephone Co. in Chile, South America, after twenty years of service with our Company. Horace will handle the engineering for the whole country of Chile. His many friends wish him success in his new venture which takes him thousands of miles from New England.

*To Place 1818-Pair Cable.*

The first underground telephone cable in New England containing 3,636 wires will be placed in service in Springfield early in 1928. It will run from a manhole in front of the Central Office on Stearns Park to Bridge Street and down Barnes Ave., a total distance of 441 feet, and will serve a part of the business section of the city. Until recently the largest telephone cable in use in the United States contained 2,424 wires. Development and perfection of the 50 percent larger cable has resulted from years of study and experimenting by Bell System engineers.

Jan., 1928, Topics—Fred W. McKinnon, Division Plant Engineer, Central Division, was transferred to Springfield as Division Plant Engineer of the Western Division, taking Horace Holt's place.

Robert T. Westermarck was appointed Division Plant Accountant at Springfield, Dec. 2, 1927. He entered the New England Co. in July, 1923. Mr. Westermarck had been engaged for his entire length of service, previous to his recent appointment, in the Methods Dept. of the General Accounting where his work as examiner of methods has kept him in close contact with Plant accounting work.

Hilmer Ackerman was appointed Plant Estimate Engineer Jan. 30, 1928. "Ack" joined the Company May 25, 1922, as a

Draftsman in the Division Engineering office. His first field assignment was plotting on 600 foot to the inch maps about everything visible to the eye, telephonically speaking,—pole lines, cables, terminals, open wire, cross arms and drop wires. These maps were indispensable to the Wire Chiefs, Line Assigners and Engineers. In 1926, he was brought into the office to figure the costs of plant estimates, which were prepared by the District Engineers to provide cable relief.

Feb., 1928, Topics—Franklin V. Moulton has been appointed Assistant Traffic Manager in Springfield Suburban, reporting to D. C. Hall, Traffic Manager.

Perry C. Maynard has been named Traffic Manager, Springfield, in charge of Dial Switching office, reporting to R. J. Dee, District Traffic Supt.

John G. Andrews has been appointed Assistant Traffic Manager in Worcester Cedar, Park and Maple reporting to L. F. Shurtleff, Traffic Manager.

Thomas F. Williams, of the Traffic Dept., has been transferred to Boston.

Carl P. Mixer, recently appointed Division Supt. of Supplies, Buildings and Motor Vehicles, entered the employ of the Company as Substation Installer at Gardner and later went to Clinton as Testman and then Wire Chief. Leaving Clinton, Carl was appointed Wire Chief at Leominster, and then the same at Fitchburg.

In Sept., 1923, he was appointed District Plant Chief of the Fitchburg District, where he remained until the Fitchburg and Worcester Districts were consolidated in August 1926, when he came to Springfield as Division Plant Supervisor.

Feb., 1928, Topics—Deane Howland, new Division Plant Supervisor for the Western Division, started with our Company as Night Operator at Windsor, Vt., in September, 1910, and in August, 1913, was sent to White River Junction, where he remained until March, 1922, going through the various grades of Installing and Central Office repair work.

In 1922 Deane was transferred to Boston as Supervisor of Toll Plant, working on routine transmission, noise and cross-talk tests, and in May, 1925, he returned to the Western Division as Transmission Engineer.

Howard W. Ellis, who has been a member of the Western Division family since 1913, has recently been appointed Division Supervisor of Rights of Way for the Metropolitan Division. Mr. Ellis was Division Supt. of Supplies, Buildings and Motor Vehicles until his recent promotion.

March, 1928, Topics—Max D. Holmes, Sales Supervisor in the Springfield office, has been transferred to the Southwest District, Boston, as District Sales Supervisor.

Stanley C. Bigda has been transferred to the Worcester Commercial office as Commercial Representative. Stanley was promoted from Collector to Commercial Representative at Springfield in October, 1927.

Mrs. Maydell D. Blodgett has been promoted to Collection Supervisor in place of Eleanor F. Healey, who has been appointed District Training Supervisor in place of Maude E. Willis. Miss Willis has returned to Amherst as Cashier, at her own request.

Eva B. Flagg succeeds Mrs. Blodgett as Cashier in the Springfield Business office. Eva joined the Telephone Co. March 20, 1911, as a Clerk at Springfield.

Herbert J. Montague was transferred to the Western Division in January, 1928, as Traffic Manager in charge of Springfield Manual. He entered the employ of the Company in July, 1914, in the Plant Dept. in Providence. For twelve years he worked in that area, gaining experience as he progressed step-by-step as Wire Chief, Maintenance Supervisor and other posts.

May, 1928, Topics—Springfield Bowling Season Ends.

One of the most interesting winter activities of the Springfield telephone family was the program of the Telephone Bowling League made up of six teams, representing Plant Accounting, Revenue Accounting, Traffic, Commercial, Line Assigners and Construction Clerks. Since the League was organized with the intention of promoting good fellowship, the Directors feel that they have more than made a success of it, particularly since this was the first year.

The Plant Accounting team was the winner, but only after a close battle with Revenue Accounting and the Line Assigners who finished second and third.

Directors of the League are; President, P. N. Dinsmore; Secretary, H. N. Woods; Samuel Black, Russell Norton, C. Hutchinson, E. Garvey and J. McLaughlin.

Averages of the leaders, Dinsmore, R. A. 95; Kennedy, C. C. 93; Buckley, P. A. 93; Woods, P. A. 90; Jones, P. A. 90.

May, 1928, Topics—Indian Orchard “Satellite.”

Foreman Oscar Colsen and a crew of installers are just drawing to the end of the largest job of the 700 C or step-by-step type machine switching PBX to be installed by New England Company installers.

The new Orchard office will be a “satellite,” unattended suburban type, requiring no operators or permanent maintenance force. Circuits are provided which will route into one of the other and larger Springfield offices all calls, alarm signals etc., which would ordinarily require the attention of an Operator or Maintenance Man.

The Indian Orchard Office consists of a combination main and intermediate distributing frame, two line finder frames with terminal equipment for eleven hundred subscribers, three connector frames, four bays of selectors, five of miscellaneous relays, an office alarm rack, an automatic power plant and all the associated apparatus that go to make up a complete office.

A notable point in connection with this office is that it jumps a step in graduating from magneto to dial, without even having been common battery.

“Always show prospective tenants the telephone booth first,” directed the landlord.

“All right,” said the janitor. “But why?”

“Then they’ll think the rooms ain’t so small.”

June, 1928, Topics—Margaret V. O’Connell and Helen M. Reilly, who were with the Revenue Accounting Dept., were transferred as Commercial Representatives in Springfield.

Maude T. Benoit former Chief Operator at Indian Orchard has been assigned to the Springfield Business office as Teller.

The Springfield Revenue Accounting girls’ bowling team captured a match from the Pittsfield Traffic girls’ team at Pittsfield. The three string totals follow:—

Pittsfield Traffic—M. Gaylord 245; M. McDonnell 232; M. Dellert 238; M. Behan 238; S. Williams 236; Total 1189.

Springfield Revenue Accounting—A. Wilber 233; J. Shea 240; E. Murphy 219; Y. LeBlanc 261; M. Cray 257; Total 1210.

June 11, 1928, Freeman K. Ostrander was appointed Senior Toll Testman. "Free" started in the Commercial, Nov. 16, 1909, as office boy and pay station attendant, in the Bridge Street building. He transferred to Plant Jan. 1, 1911, as an Installer, becoming a Combination Man in 1915. He served in the 401st Telegraph Battalion during the World War. He rejoined the Company as Local Testman and in 1922 became Toll Testman.

July, 1928, Topics—Casimir Marcou, on June 11, was transferred from Methods work in the Boston Revenue Accounting office to the position of Chief Accounts Supervisor in the Springfield Revenue Accounting office. His many friends in Boston wish him good luck.

J. Howard Marshall, Chief Accounts Supervisor at Springfield Revenue Accounting, has been appointed to the staff of the Auditor of Receipts, Boston. He entered the employ of the Company Aug. 16, 1920, as a Bookkeeper in the Boston Revenue Accounting office and was transferred to Springfield April 19, 1924, to assist in the consolidation of the Worcester and Springfield Accounting Offices.

Sept. 1928, Topics—John H. Kirby, for the past five years employed as Central Office Man at the Worcester exchange, has been transferred to transmission work, and after three months' intensive training in the Company's transmission school will take up his duties in that line under Division Supervisor of Transmission, Paul Kellogg, of Springfield.

Eugene F. Goggin was transferred to the Installation and Maintenance Dept., July 1, 1928. "Gene" went to work for the Company Nov. 5, 1924. At first he was Time Keeper in the Cable Dept., and then worked as a Helper there until this transfer.

Ruth Edwards was appointed Division Traffic Instructor Aug. 19, 1928. Ruth learned the art of operating in Westerly, R.I., where she was employed in 1918. A transfer to Spring-

field took place in Nov., 1924, where she reported to Miss Mae I. Donovan, Chief Operator. After several promotions she received her present assignment.

Oct., 1928, Topics—John F. Shaw, Springfield Manager, has been moved to Rhode Island to take over the Managership of the Newport Office.

Frank W. Rising, Commercial Representative in the Springfield office, has resigned. He has made many real friends during his fourteen years' employment both among those with whom he has worked and also while carrying on his duties among the business men of this city. Everybody who came in contact with him and learned to know Frank, could always feel sure of a smile and a cheerful word.

Stephen M. Whitney was first employed June 16, 1924, and was assigned to the General Commercial Engineering Dept. at Boston. He has had varied experience in Commercial Engineering, particularly on major and modified commercial surveys. "Steve" comes to the Division well qualified to assume the duties as Assistant Division Commercial Survey Engineer.

We are glad to welcome Sydney F. Spencer to the Springfield Business office of the Commercial Dept., who is to be a Commercial Representative.

R. L. Sheppard has been named Machine Switching Supervisor; Arthur D. Hamilton, new Maintenance Supervisor for the Springfield District; F. K. Wrisley just appointed Chief Switchman, Springfield Machine.

Isabel Leslie of the Springfield Revenue Accounting office, recently returned from a month's vacation spent in Canada, visiting relatives in Winnepeg, Montreal, Saskatchewan and Regina. She says that Canada is very much up-to-date in telephone methods and that the dial system has been in effect for quite some time.

Nov., 1928, Topics—Margaret E. Connelly has just been appointed Division Chief Clerk in the Plant Dept. Margaret started work as a Stenographer in the Division Plant Office Jan. 2, 1909, a year after the functional set-up, and has served under all the Plant Supts. from R. H. Keller, the first, C. N. Tasker, R. C. Marden, J. H. Dodge, to Fred Rockhold.

On Oct. 1, 1928, Eugene R. McLaughlin was promoted



from Office Manager at Springfield to Manager of the Springfield Exchange.

Robert M. Hodgson was transferred on Oct. 1st from Manager at North Adams to Office Manager at Springfield.

C. S. Stebbins has just been made Division Supervisor of Supply Service.

Mary A. O'Donnell, who has been Chief Operator at Northampton since Feb. 6, 1927, was transferred to the Division Traffic office as Division Instructor. Mary started as an Operator in Holyoke Sept. 2, 1912, and advanced to the post of Chief Operator April 25, 1926. On Feb. 6, 1927, she was transferred to Northampton as Chief Operator.

Dec., 1928, Topics—Philip N. Howell was appointed Division Plant Engineer of the Western Division Oct., 15, 1928. "Phil" joined the Company in Vermont May 29, 1914, and came to Springfield as an Engineer in 1925.

Howard D. Bailey was transferred to the Western Division as Central Office Equipment Engineer.

Arthur W. Horton became the new Western Division Traffic Engineer, and Joseph H. MacNeil and Fred A. Holt were assigned to Mr. Horton's staff as Manual Traffic Engineers.

H. J. Montague was appointed Dial System Supervisor with direct supervision over all dial conversions in the Division.

Feb., 1929, Topics—On Jan. 1, 1929, a new department made its debut. Hereafter we will have associated with each Division an Auditor of Disbursements.

R. T. Westermarck was appointed Auditor of Disbursements for the Western Division, reporting to Mr. Fred W. Tucker, General Auditor of Disbursements.

Jan., 1929, Topics—Northern and Southern Areas.

The important organization change, which took effect January 1st, resulting in the formation of two new operating areas to cover the entire Company,—the Northern and Southern Areas,—brought about several changes of personnel in the Western Division. Clinton B. Allsopp, the new General Commercial Manager of the Southern Area, included on his staff Charles W. Dufresne as Division Manager of the Metropolitan Division, thus depriving the Western Division of an esteemed Division Manager.

Andrew Schultz, General Manager of the Northern Area, appointed W. A. McCoy,—formerly District Manager, Northwest District, Metropolitan,—Western Division Manager, reporting to B. T. Miller, General Commercial Manager, Northern Area.

C. W. Baier, Western Division Traffic Supt., was transferred to the staff of J. E. Harrell, who had been named General Supervisor of Traffic in the Northern Area.

Fred Rockhold, Western Division Plant Supt., was selected by C. N. Tasker, General Plant Manager, Northern Area, for his staff, but was not moved from Springfield.

Inez E. Kavanaugh, Western Division Supervisor in charge of other Departmental Disbursement Accounting, reports to the Division Auditor of Disbursements, Mr. Westermarck.

All Plant, Traffic and Commercial accounting work will now be transferred to the jurisdiction of the General Auditor.

Mrs. Inez E. Kavanaugh started her telephone career March 7, 1910, as an Operator in the Springfield office. Inez advanced through the various operating stages to become Assistant Chief Operator. From here she was transferred to the Division Cashier's office as a Supervisor of Pay Rolls for the Traffic, Commercial and Revenue Accounting Depts., reporting to Miss Catherine Trent, who was Division Cashier. Upon Miss Trent's resignation, Mrs. Kavanaugh was appointed Division Cashier. She remained here until her recent transfer to the newly formed Division Disbursements Accounting Dept.

Alfreda D. Sinclair, who was Assistant Division Cashier, was transferred to the Division Traffic office Jan. 1, 1929, as Supervisor, and soon was appointed Assistant to the Chief Clerk, Miss Loretta Kennedy. Alfreda, an excellent Comptometrist, was first employed on some special work for the Division Traffic for three weeks. Her visit afforded mutual satisfaction, for she has been with the Company ever since. Her service record started Sept. 24, 1923, being assigned to the Division Cashier's office, on payroll work, and in a few years progressed to the post of Assistant Division Cashier.

Henry G. Hagen was transferred to the Western Division Jan. 1, 1929. Henry later recalled the following events: He joined the Company Oct. 22, 1917, being assigned to the Cen-

tral Office Equipment Engineering in the Central Division. In 1919 he was transferred to the Equipment and Buildings Dept., of the Engineering Dept. in Boston. When the Northern and Southern Areas were organized, most of this Department's work was transferred to the Divisions. Howard D. Bailey was appointed Division Central Office Equipment Engineer at Springfield, reporting to the Division Plant Engineer.

The members of Howard Bailey's force were: Walter Burr, "Sam" Chambers, Miles Cogan, Henry Hagen, John Marion, "Bill" Proctor, Dave Roach and Charles Slack, all from Boston; John Armstrong and "Bob" Wiggin from Springfield; and George H. Spelman from Worcester. This group carried on the engineering of Common Battery and Magneto Central offices, and special station equipment, for the Western Division, which then included the Worcester, Springfield, Pittsfield and Vermont Districts.

About 1931 or 1932, when the business depression had reduced the need of central office engineering, the work of this department was returned to Boston, except the engineering of special station equipment, magneto central offices and dial PBXs, which were handled by Henry Hagen, Central Office Engineer, assisted by John Armstrong and Charlie Slack. Howard Bailey and John Marion returned to Boston, David Roach went to Worcester as Testman, "Bob" Wiggin returned to Holyoke as Testman, Miles Cogan and "Sam" Chambers went into the House Servicing group in Worcester and Springfield, respectively. George Spelman had retired.

An earlier Topics gave this item regarding Mr. Spelman: On August 1, 1923, Central Office Foreman George H. Spelman, of Worcester, rounded out 25 years of telephone service with the New England Co. He started in switchboard construction work in the Haymarket Exchange in Boston Aug. 1, 1898.

Jan., 1929, Topics—Charlotte Gregg, the well-known Cashier in the Western Division Plant Accounting office, severed her connection with the Company the first of the year, and is placed on the retired list at her own request, after serving the Company faithfully and well for 32 years.

Miss Gregg has a record of which anyone might well be proud. No matter what the weather, she was always at her desk

each day and there never was an error she could not find. She has seen the Accounting Dept. grow from a small beginning to its present size. Her co-workers regret to see her go; and presented her with a beautiful sapphire ring as a token of their esteem.

In January, 1929, Michael F. Coyne was named Supervisor of Plant Accounting. "Mike" entered the Company in 1907 at Manchester, N.H. as Clerk for the Foreman of Maintenance, Angus Bailey, who reported to Manager Ralph Mandell. The next year he became XA Clerk for District Plant Chief Marden. During the World War, he attended the Machine Gun Officers School at Fort Hancock, Georgia, and was commissioned Second Lieutenant. In 1923 he rejoined the Company at Fitchburg in the Plant Accounting, and in September, 1925, he was transferred to Springfield as Verifying Clerk. This composition is not complete without mention of Mike's inimitable gift of storytelling, enjoyed both near and far.

E. E. Geoffrion, formerly Assistant Supervisor of Plant Accounting, was designated Supervisor of Estimates and Special Reports.

On May 1, Mrs. Louisa Dunbar, Division Commercial Cashier since March, 1926, assumed her new duties as Division Training Supervisor.

S. Elizabeth Bunnell was transferred from the Plant Accounting Dept., where she was recently transferred, to the Commercial Dept. as Division Commercial Cashier.

June, 1929, Topics—New Association Formed.

An association known as "The Central Office Maintenance Association" has been formed at Springfield and is made up of all Inside Maintenance Men in the Springfield Exchange. The Association was formed for the purpose of remembering members in case of sickness, etc., and to handle the social work of the department.

Tom Welch, the father of the organization, has been chosen President and is assisted by a general committee consisting of E. F. Jenness, R. E. Kingsbury, W. E. Sanderson and F. W. Williams; an entertainment committee consisting of F. Williams, W. Sponberg, C. Young, R. McGillvary and Eugene

Flagg; and a publicity committee consisting of C. Donovan, C. Rogers, R. E. Kingsbury, J. Collins and E. Bray.

### *Improvements at Chicopee*

A good piece of work has been completed by the Springfield Equipment forces in raising the roof, installing additional equipment, and remodeling the switchboard at Chicopee.

The artistic work of painters and decorators inside and outside the Chicopee Telephone Building is noticeable and gratifying. Combine this with the hundred per cent service rendered by the Chicopee Operators guided by Edith M. McCarthy, Chief Operator, and one may easily conceive that the Chicopee Exchange has improved in effect as well as in appearance.

The Chicopee office has been inscribed on the silver cup that the Traffic Dept. offers to the exchange in the district that has the best service rating for three months. Edith McCarthy was hostess at a party given in honor of the event.

July, 1929, Topics—On May 3, the Long Lines Dept., A. T. & T. Co., held a First Aid contest at Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and for the fourth time in the past year our Division Safety Supervisor, Ralph A. Tyler, was invited to act as Chief Judge to handle the contest.

C. E. Curtis was appointed Division Plant Engineer at Springfield Sept. 1, 1929. "Cliff" started to work for the Company in January, 1906, as an Engineer on development studies in the General Engineering office. During January, 1910, he was transferred to Portland, Maine, as District Engineer. January, 1920, he returned to the General Engineering office as Facilities Engineer, where he remained until coming to Springfield.

Philip H. Howell, who has been Division Plant Engineer at Springfield, was appointed Engineer of Outside Plant for the Northern Area.

Roger Lappin has been appointed Division Transmission Engineer. He joined the Company in 1923 and served at Boston in the Division Plant Engineers, and in the offices of the

General Plant Supervisor and of the General Toll Plant Supervisor.

Paul Kellogg, who has been doing Transmission work in the Western Division since 1926, was promoted to Pittsfield District Plant Engineer. He started with the Engineers in Boston in 1923.

Donald W. Jackson is another Transmission Expert. He started as a Draftsman in 1923 and later had two years in survey work on high tension line and power problems. He also had four years under the Division Transmission Engineer at Springfield.

Aug. 1929, Topics—Allen E. Brickett, assistant to John J. O'Brien, Chief Accounts Supervisor of the Boston Revenue Accounting office, was transferred to the Springfield Revenue Accounting office as Chief Accounts Supervisor on August 1. During his brief stay at the Boston office, Allen made many friends, who presented him with a golf bag and set of clubs, together with their best wishes for his future in the telephone business and at Golf.

Laurence B. Shepherd, Division Toll Tester, was appointed Division Toll Plant Supervisor Sept. 17, 1929.

Sept., 1929, Topics—Eleanor F. Healey, District Training Instructress of the Springfield District since Jan. 23, 1928, has been transferred to the Springfield Commercial Office as Office Supervisor, filling the vacancy caused by the transfer of Robert M. Hodgson to the Springfield District office on special work.

E. Warner Eldridge was transferred to the Palmer Exchange as Manager Sept. 23, 1929. Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge have conducted the North Wilbraham Agency office since 1916, succeeding "Joe" Hart, who took it in 1912, when the switchboard was moved to the Collins Inn, opposite the Post Office. After Proprietor Hart's withdrawal, the Company leased a newly remodeled house situated near the B & A depot, which became the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge. David Dunham is appointed the new Agent.

Nov., 1929, Topics—Springfield defeats Boston to win Company Championship.

A pleasant afternoon made conditions ideal for the Tele-



WESTERN DIVISION COMMERCIAL CONFERENCE AT GREENFIELD

Front row, left to right: C. Parker, C. Foley, A. Nelligan, M. Anthony, C. O'Donnell, C. Barry, M. Allen, W. Dunn, H. Wilson.  
 Second row: G. Shea, C. Hopkins, H. Pratt, P. McMorrin, H. Fasick, J. Griffin, R. Woodcock, J. Carragher. *Third row:* E. Beebe, J. Donoghue, J. Dick, F. Holden, B. Miller, H. Chenerey, J. Morse, J. Harrell, L. Johnson, F. Pierce, A. Danforth, E. Eldridge, A. Burrows, C. Weston. *Fourth row:* G. Gowdy, J. Fair, G. Hinckley, G. Morley, J. Weinheimer, R. Hodgson, R. Nichols, E. Sidley, E. Smith. *Fifth row:* E. Lowell, H. Brock, W. McLaughlin, W. Barker, R. Inglis, F. Kessler, R. Fuller, R. Hoit, P. Thompson, R. Jones. *Sixth row:* E. Wagner, R. Murdick, B. Patten, unknown. *Top:* R. Bradbury.



LOCAL NO. 4, I. B. T. W. INITIATION OF LOCAL OFFICERS

*Seated:* George Carty, Frank Rattman, Ralph Hatheway, Steve O'Connor (President of Local No. 4), John Kuehn, George Bresnahan, Howard Johnson, Stanley Nye. *Standing:* Eddie Garvey, Francis Croken, Eddie Shea, Sabby Napolitan, Jerry Coughlin (President of the I.B.T.W., Boston), Joseph Sheehan, John Prendergast, Tom Wright, Bernie Monahan, Dan Coulson, Raymond Kelly.





SPRINGFIELD BUSINESS OFFICE—1929

*First row, left to right: J. Griffin, S. Spencer, T. Hanford, F. Poole, J. Cavanaugh, B. Dwyer, C. Bresnahan. Second row: D. LaFond, E. Bunnell, M. Blodgett, C. Pepper, E. McLaughlin, Manager; E. Flagg, E. Healey, E. Moriarty, B. Lindsay. Third row: M. O'Connell, M. Sundquist, C. Isham, H. Reilly, F. Ksionzek, E. Lyman, M. Anthony, M. Maloney, E. Hederman, E. Hynes. Top row: N. Ward, M. Benoit, K. Brennan, E. Williams, E. Scullane, K. McGrath, A. Sheldon, J. Cramer, D. LaFlamme.*



A SERVICE ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

*Front row, seated:* Eleanor Cronin, Terry Griffin, Lib Rogers, Ralph Hatheway, Merrill Steere, Henry Phillips, George deLys, Leonard Nystedt, Paul Ducharme, George Hebert, Cecilia O'Donnell, Martha Maloney, Barbara Elliot, Mary Humphrey, Robert Murdick, Eunice Sullivan, Pierce McMorran, Marion Allen. *Back row, standing:* Allen Morton, Elmer Wagner, Pearl Brougham, Etta Jones, Henry Hagen, Inez Kavanaugh, Otto Fahlbusch, Clark Wilson, Mary Cooney, Leonard Hutchinson, Charles Weeter.

phone Championship baseball game on Saturday, October 5. The day found both contending teams in tip-top shape at Ferryway Green, Malden.

Springfield, the cream of the Western Division, invaded the bailiwick of the All-Stars of Boston, in the final and deciding game of all Telephone ball players. The rivalry was keen, after the decisive manner in which each of these teams disposed of its league opponents.

Although Boston played an alert ball game they were forced to bow in defeat before the inevitable champions from Springfield. The Springfield Club showed co-ordination and team work that spelled long practice together. Their men were young, and they played "heads-up" baseball from the start.

Throughout the entire game "Babe" Steere, of Springfield, distinguished himself as the outstanding star. The intelligent work of the snappy little catcher, MacDonnell, as well as the short-stopping of Captain Trauschke, are deserving of praise. The good center-fielding and second-base work of Kennedy and Donovan, respectively, was not lost on the spectators, who ate it up. Pete McLaughlin, the big "Ump," furnished no small amount of humor for the crowd.

P. N. Dinsmore is leaving the Springfield Revenue Accounting office to join the staff of the Assistant Auditor of Receipts.

Charlotte Gregg, former Western Division Cashier, who retired recently, surprised her many friends with the announcement of her engagement. She will be married in the spring and reside in the Nutmeg State as Mrs. Frank Coombs.

Dec., 1929, Topics—In connection with the plan for consolidating the positions of Field Financing Cashiers, the Treasurer has appointed three Division Cashiers, one in the Eastern, Western and Southern Divisions, who will report to him.

Exie E. Geoffrion is the acting Cashier of Western Division. Prior to this appointment he has held several supervisory positions, and at one time was Cashier in the Fitchburg District.

Jeannie M. Gaugh was appointed Assistant Division Cashier. She entered the employ of the Company in 1908, at Fitchburg, and was transferred to Springfield in 1925 as Assistant and then Division Plant Cashier.

E. R. McKay was appointed new Toll Supervisor in the

Western Division in Nov., 1929, succeeding to the position held by Linwood L. Ross.

Carl W. Proctor, at the same time, was appointed Division Traffic Engineer, taking the place of Arthur W. Horton.

Arthur W. Horton and Linwood L. Ross, popular Western Division Traffic men, who were transferred to other fields, were honored on their departure by their associates.

George T. Fahey, Wire Chief of the Greenfield Area, was transferred to the staff of the Division Plant Supervisor on Nov. 26, 1929. Mr. Fahey has been employed continuously in the Pittsfield District since 1906, and was for many years Wire Chief of the Great Barrington Area. In 1924 he was transferred to Greenfield where he has been very successful and made many friends.

Dec., 1929, Topics—Ralph Woodcock, the new Results Supervisor in the Commercial Dept., started his telephone career in New York City in 1923, with the Plant Dept. In 1924, he came to Boston and worked in the Engineering Dept. until 1927, when he transferred to the General Commercial office. In the fall he was a Commercial Representative in Worcester and in May, 1929, he was appointed Commercial Engineer for the Worcester District. On September 30 he came to Springfield to take up his latest assignment.

Martha Geissler has been appointed Division Training Supervisor to take the place of Mrs. Dunbar who is transferred to the Springfield District office. Miss Geissler has been employed in Holyoke as Commercial Representative since June, 1920.

Jan., 1930, Topics—Springfield Goes 100 per cent Dial.

Promptly at the scheduled hour of midnight on Nov. 23, 17,000 manual subscribers at Springfield were cut over to the step-by-step dial system—Units 6 and 7. Joseph Morgan of Worcester, acted as cut-over supervisor.

Most of the new equipment is located on the sixth floor of the new building at 295 Worthington Street. Many new features are included in the new Dial equipment among which may be mentioned two-party message rate lines, level hunting connectors, automatic coin box trunks, 51-C automatic dial

testers, and, of course, line finders are used instead of line switches as in the older offices.

During the past year, the Springfield Dial office has been an experimental laboratory, so to speak, where tests have been made relative to the possibility of combining the handling of Toll Traffic and Dial "A" board traffic on one switchboard.

This experimental work has shown that such a combination of two totally different types of traffic is practicable. The result is that with the cut-over of the remaining 17,000 manual stations at midnight on Nov. 23, 1929, Springfield became the only Dial office of its kind in the entire territory from the standpoint of traffic operation. This cut-over marks the beginning of a new era in the simplification of the placing of toll calls for subscribers and in the handling of toll calls and assistance traffic by dial operators.

Among those responsible for the success of the cut-over are the following:

Ralph L. Sheppard, in charge of co-ordinating the activities of the various departments; Herbert Montague, in charge of the traffic functions; Messrs. Roukes and Woodcock, representing the Division Commercial Dept., Frank Wrisley, Inside Wire Chief in charge of the maintenance of the old and the new dial office equipment; Frank Buck, Outside Wire Chief in charge of the station changes, test desk activities and line and cable plant; Messrs. Thieson and Kinnard, of the Western Electric Co., in charge of the installation of the new equipment; Messrs. Better and Noel of the Division Plant Dept., in charge of the testing and acceptance of the apparatus.

District Traffic Supt. Dee has an able corps of assistants in charge of the various units at Springfield. John G. Andrews is Traffic Manager in charge of the Dial and Toll offices. Mary P. Mason continues as Chief Operator of the Toll Office and Rose A. Carlin is Chief Operator of the Dial Office. Charles H. Anderson is in charge of the Auxiliary Unit and is responsible for the Dial results, Dial assignments and subscriber instructions work.

Fred W. Williams was appointed a Switchman soon after the Springfield cut-over. Joining the Company in 1906, Fred has worked himself up through the grades of Installer, Combi-

nation man, Class A Sub-station Repairman, Powerman and Central Office Repairman.

Walter W. Farrington was transferred to the Division Plant Engineers about 1930. After being appointed Wire Chief at Westfield in April, 1916, and serving in the World War two years, he has been at Springfield in Central Office maintenance, line assigning, routine plans, and power maintenance.

Feb., 1930, Topics—Plant Employment Supervisors.

A new position of Division Employment Supervisor in the Plant Dept. has been created in each of the three divisions of the Northern Area. W. S. Mason was selected for the Western Division. He will report directly to his Division Plant Supt., and will have under his supervision the Division Training Supervisor and the Division Safety Supervisor. He will have general supervision over employment matters, training, force analysis, practices pertaining to examinations, accident prevention and first aid.

Mr. Mason has been in the service since 1910. He was a charter member of the Worcester Credit Union and served as its first President. He also served as President of the Worcester Local I.B.T.W. at one time. He came to Springfield as Division Toll Wire Chief in 1924.

John F. Manning, formerly Plant Accountant of the Western Division was transferred to the staff of the General Disbursements Accountant in February, 1930.

Edward C. Michaud, formerly Current Flow Supervisor in the Southern Division, was transferred to the Western as Reports Supervisor.

April, 1930, Topics—On Feb. 24, Marion Cray was appointed to the position of Supervisor of the Toll Sorting Section in the Springfield Revenue Accounting office. Entering the employ of the Company in November 1923, Miss Cray's progress has been steady and her experience in the various branches of the work comprehensive. Miss Cray has been prominently identified with the social and athletic activities of the office, particularly as a member for several seasons of the bowling team.

John L. Crosby came to Springfield from Worcester June 29, 1930, as District Traffic Supervisor. John first reported for

work in Aug. 1910, as a student in the General Traffic Dept., and in May, 1912, was appointed Assistant Traffic Chief, Salem District, which position he also held in the Portland and Quincy Districts. In August, 1918, he was assigned to force studies for the Metropolitan Division. After adding further to his traffic experiences, he was transferred to Worcester April 15, 1927, as District Traffic Supervisor, where he remained until his Springfield appointment.

Mary E. Toomey was appointed Chief Clerk of the Division Plant Engineers office. Mary was engaged for four months on Inventory as a temporary clerk, June 1, 1925, and her diligence and ability earned her a regular place on the pay roll. She continued as a Combination Clerk and Stenographer in the Engineers, until she worked herself right into her present position.

Aug., 1930, Topics—Catherine Griffin was recently appointed Supervisor of the Toll Billing Section of the Springfield Revenue Accounting office. Miss Griffin has made remarkable progress since she entered the employment of the Company in October, 1924. Her first assignment was in the Toll Section. Being capable, she was transferred to the Machine Billing Section as Revenue Proof Clerk and later became Assignment Clerk. She has been active in all social events and has won the friendship of her co-workers.

Sept., 1930, Topics—On Aug. 6, Anna E. McCarthy, of the Springfield Revenue Accounting office, completed twenty-five years of service with the Company. She has a commendable record for accurate work and punctuality in attendance, qualities which have won for her a supervisory position in the Accounting Section.

Sept., 1930, Topics—Theresa Boden was a green clerk just ten years ago. She worked successively and successfully for the Pennsylvania Company in the office of the Benefit Committee, the American Company with the Benefit and Medical Dept., and the New England Company. In the Western Division, where she was Division Employment Supervisor in the Traffic Dept., she was admired and loved for the graceful way in which she handled the duties of that job. Today she holds the title of General Health Course Supervisor for the entire Bell

System, the highest position of its kind in the system. Her appointment took effect on August 1.

Oct., 1930, Topics—Russell L. Norton, formerly Western Division Force Supervisor, succeeds Mr. Berry in the Framingham Area as Traffic Manager.

C. H. Tozier succeeded Mr. Norton, becoming the Division Force Supervisor on Aug. 18. Claude first entered the employ of the Company in Sept., 1925 and in Oct., 1926, became Traffic Manager at Worcester; in a year he was transferred to Fitchburg as Traffic Manager and in April, 1929, served Vermont in the same capacity, assisting Mr. Roby. In Oct., 1929, he returned to Worcester as District Force Supervisor where he participated in the cut to Dial.

Cecilia I. O'Donnell was appointed District Commercial Instructor Sept. 2, 1929. "Ceil" joined the Holyoke Business office force April 16, 1923, and had advanced to the position of Cashier.

B. M. Kelloway was transferred from Commercial Representative at Bangor, to the Springfield District on Sept. 8. "Max" entered the Company's ranks in Boston last November as a student. On completion of a six weeks' course of instruction, he was assigned to Bangor where he established himself as a conscientious and willing worker.

"Did you hear the stepladder slip, mother?"

"Yes; I hope your father didn't fall."

"Not yet; he's still hanging onto the curtain rod."

#### Annual Outing of Local No. 4, I.B.T.W.

On Sept. 6, 1930, 300-odd members and guests of Local No. 4 gathered at Riverside Park, and with the help of Old Sol made it a day never to be forgotten.

Promptly at one o'clock the obstacle golf course opened up with an exhibition of trick shots by Eddie Garvey, with the assistance of Francis A. Carty. Several foursomes played the course during the afternoon. Ray Snow and F. Ostrander proved to the satisfaction of Frank Buckley and Harry Dickinson which was the best team. The feature of the course was Frank Rogers—(hole in one shot).



Report was sent to the dining hall that the party was complete and the battle was on. Clams and turkey disappear. The ability of the Outing Committee, H. E. Oakes, Chairman; T. J. McDonald, G. W. Carty, R. Bolewine and R. Chase was clearly demonstrated in requesting Dr. D. L. Lynch, Medical Director, to be present.

The high spot of the entire program was the honoring of six of the organization's members, who have been retired from active duty by the Company. These six members—Frank Wyatt, Charles Newton, "Bud" Fisher, John R. Cotter, John Munley and Reuben C. Mehderian, were presented suitable remembrances by the President of Local No. 4, E. T. Sheridan, showing the esteem in which these brothers are held by their organization.

After dinner the games were on again. Barnyard golf was demonstrated in its best form by "Babe" Steere and Maurice Blaisdell. The N. E. T. & T. Co. champion baseball team were the guests of the Local No. 4, and Manager McDonnell attempted to show the team his other games, such as bridge and pinochle, but not with much success, as far as victories go.

A wrestling bout of two hours' duration between Joe Robinson and J. Walker, was the big "meat" of the day. Boxing, William Conley vs. J. Ryan, was enjoyed by all.

The party was voted the best yet and closed with a real old fashioned Connecticut Valley thunderstorm.

Edward C. Michaud, Reports Supervisor in the Disbursements Accounting office was transferred to Portland in the same capacity Oct. 1, 1930. "Eddie" started with the New York Telephone Co. on June 30, 1918, and on July 7, 1924, entered the New England Co. and worked at New Bedford in the Plant Accounting office. In Sept., 1925, he was transferred to Providence, and in Feb., 1930, was welcomed in Springfield.

Nov., 1930, Topics—Thomas F. Maguire retired on Oct. 8. A dinner was given at the Hotel Highland, Springfield, in Tom's honor, who retires after 42 years' service. Among those present were F. Rockhold, Division Plant Supt.; C. J. Curtis, Division Plant Engineer, Springfield; Philip H. Howell, Engineer of Outside Plant, Boston; W. S. Mason, Division Employment Supervisor; H. H. Gallup and Augustus McAulay.

The remarks made by these and other guests were of a nature to convey to Mr. Maguire a great deal of satisfaction.

“Tom” was born at Lowell, Mass., Aug. 18, 1865, entering the employ of the Telephone Co. at Lowell in March, 1888. “Tom” went to the Boston Division for a time. He came back to Lowell in 1900 and was appointed Assistant Division Foreman under A. L. King. He went to New Bedford in 1903 as Division Foreman. In Dec., 1904, “Tom” went to Mexico City as General Manager of the Mexican Telephone Co. In 1905 he assumed the duties of Plant Supt. with the Hudson River Telephone Co., with headquarters at Plattsburg, N.Y. He returned to the Western Division in 1911, where he has since been associated with the Engineering Dept. on the Toll, Pole and Cable Construction program.

Harry Gallup acted as toastmaster and presented “Tom” with a beautiful electric clock. After fitting words of appreciation each one present was served a piece of the guest cake bearing “Tom’s” name. “Tom” is Secretary-Treasurer of the William J. Denver Chapter No. 20, Pioneers of America, and left for California Oct. 10 to attend the Pioneers’ Convention there.

A. B. McClure, former Traffic Manager at Portsmouth, N.H., was transferred to Springfield and was succeeded in Portsmouth by J. G. Andrews.

Dec., 1930, Topics—“Al” Starr of Springfield retired recently after thirty-three years and five months of service. Mr. Starr entered the service in 1897, in the Commercial Dept. Some time ago he was transferred to the Directory Dept., when that phase of work was separated from the Commercial.

Mr. Starr was one of the pioneers in the field of classified advertising. His many years of service with the Telephone Company brought him into contact with hundreds of Springfield business men among whom he has always been popular.

Ralph L. Sheppard, Division Machine Switching Supervisor at Springfield, was transferred to the General Plant Supervisor’s office at Boston on November 1.

Bernard A. Dwyer succeeded Fred P. Holden as Commercial Representative at Portland. Mr. Dwyer, who entered the Com-

pany in 1928, has been in the Commercial Dept. at Northampton and Springfield.

James W. S. Mears reported for work at Springfield and was assigned to the General Sales office. His telephone career began in 1929, when he was employed by the Directory Dept. at Salem, selling advertising. "Jim's" success in selling and, later, foretelling the future telephone growth, may be attributed to the be-witch-ing charms he acquired in Salem.

Jan., 1931, Topics—John J. Reddy, newly appointed Division Commercial Supervisor succeeding Chester E. Roukes, who has been appointed Results Supervisor for the Northern Area, was formerly District Manager of the New Hampshire District.

Mr. Reddy, who entered the Company in 1924, has had wide experience in the Commercial Dept. After finishing his student training course he worked as a student engineer. In December, 1924, he went to Lowell as Commercial Representative. In March, 1925, John was appointed Commercial Training Supervisor attached to the General Office. He was appointed General Sales Supervisor in 1929, and later in the same year went to Manchester as New Hampshire District Manager.

Feb., 1931, Topics—Springfield Central Office Maintenance.

Gene Flagg was re-elected President, and Charles Rogers, Jr., was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer of the C. O. M. Association at a meeting held at the Highland Hotel on December 18. The Executive Committee elected at that time includes: President, Gene Flagg; Charles Rogers, Jr., T. A. Welch, Carl Donovan, Leroy Rodimon, Earl Williams and L. R. Nickerson.

Carl Donovan was selected by the President to act as Chairman of the entertainment committee, who selected W. F. Sponberg and L. F. Rodimon to serve with him.

Items such as the following were frequent in Topics: Christine Clow was not to be outdone by others in the sales work of the Division Traffic office and her efforts won for her one of the coveted pen and pencil sets. Margaret Reed was one of the Division Traffic girls whose excellent sales work won for her a pen and pencil set.

Prof: "Robert Burns wrote 'To a Fieldmouse.' "

Voice (from rear of room): "Did he get an answer?"

The names of the editorial staff of Topics were: R. C. Farnham, Editor; J. P. Neville, Assistant Editor; and the Associate Editors for the Western Division were: M. S. Blaisdell, Plant; G. H. Parker, Vermont Plant, and Loretta L. Kennedy, Traffic.

The date for the "closing" has, at last, arrived. As for errors and omissions, "please excuse it." Best wishes and "Good-by."













